The Emptiness of Umberto Eco SIMON BLACKBURN

THE NEW REPUBLIC

OUT OF IOWA:
How Gore Stacked the Deck
What Bush Learned From Clinton
Orrin, We Hardly Knew Ye

EBRUARY 7, 2000

How New Hampshire Learned to Love Government

AN COHN

TRB:
Yossi Klein Halevi

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4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Dick Armey and the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus, &c.

6 **YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI** TRB: OUR GANG The hidden corruption of Israeli life.

9 **THE EDITORS** SKY'S THE LIMIT Missile defense is a great idea. But it doesn't work.

10 **NOTEBOOK** Why is America blocking a peacekeeping force for the Congo? &c.

12 **JON HENLEY** PARIS DISPATCH: UNLIMITED APPETITE A hunger strike at UNESCO.

13 **CATHERINE ELTON** QUITO DISPATCH: JUNGLE FEVER In Latin America, indigenous movements never win. So why did one almost seize power last week in Ecuador?

OUT OF IOWA

14 **JONATHAN CHAIT** ESCAPE HATCH The presidential campaign as job interview.

15 **DAVID GRANN** ENTRENCHED WARFARE In Iowa, the long-dormant Gore juggernaut finally emerged. But is it the man who's hit his stride or just the machine?

17 **MICHELLE COTTLE** ICE CAPADES With a smile, a firm handshake, and an agenda that nobody cares about, George W. glides through the caucuses.

20 **JOHN B. JUDIS** CAPTURE THE FLAG George W. will win the GOP nomination. But the longer he battles McCain, especially in South Carolina, the worse he'll do in November.

23 **JONATHAN COHN** THE GRANITE SHIFTS Everybody knows the people of New Hampshire hate taxes and loathe government. But it's no longer true. New Hampshire is in the midst of a political revolution, and presidential campaigns may never be the same.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: A PASSION IN THE DESERT Jane Campion's *Holy Smoke!* is portentous and predictable.

28 **MARTIN FILLER** ON ARCHITECTURE: SHAFTS OF LIGHT The rediscovery of Sir John Soane, one of England's greatest architects.

34 **SIMON BLACKBURN** PROFESSOR WHATEVER *Kant and the Platypus: Essays on Language and Cognition* by Umberto Eco, translated by Alastair McEwan

39 **ADAM ZAGAJEWSKI** POEM *Square d'Orléans*

40 **G.W. BOWERSOCK** THE INFLAMING IMAGE *The Portrait of the Lover* by Maurizio Bettini, translated by Laura Gibbs

43 **JEFFREY HERF** THE TWENTIETH CENTURY'S LAST SURPRISE *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse and the New Europe* by Angela Stent

46 **FRANKLIN FOER** WASHINGTON DIARIST: REBOUND

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Armey advancing

TO THE EDITORS:
Somewhere between two and three decades ago I made the determination that Representative Dick Armey was an unmitigated asshole. So when you pronounced him "Man of the Millennium" I was nonplussed ("Armey of One," by Nancy Glibbs, January 3). My wife is a graduate of SMU and is much smarter about these things than I am, so I asked her to read the article. She pronounced it scathing satire. This is a genre that I am not familiar with. But I love it.

ROBERT PARNELL
Waco, Texas

TO THE EDITORS:
Although I am one of the purists who insists the new millennium will not dawn until January 1, 2001, I was deeply moved by your millennium issue (January 3). Frankly, I am still meditating on your list of the top three states in which water can be found—no other journal I have recently read has made such a bold claim.

Regarding Representative Dick Armey's contributions to humanity, I must take you to task for two things:

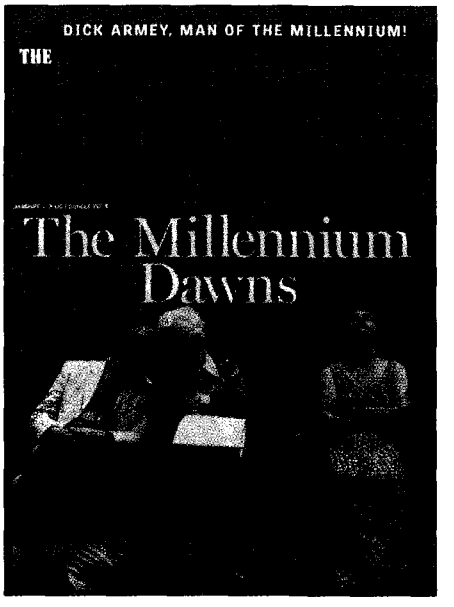
1. How could you overlook his contribution to William Harvey's discovery of circulation? The relationship between macroeconomics and the flow of arterial to venous blood is obvious to any child.

2. Only a mathematical illiterate could not know of Armey's contribution to the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus. I realize that the "hard sciences" may not be the forte of your staff, but, gentlepersons, please!

Despite these two glaring omissions, I plan to store my copy of the issue in a fire-resistant vault. I only hope my grandchildren will remember to bring it to me on my deathbed.

GORDON WILLIAMS
Lugoff, South Carolina

TO THE EDITORS:
Congratulations to Nancy Glibbs on a wonderful summary of Representative Dick Armey's attributes. Among Armey's other achievements, let's not overlook his



principled blocking of any meaningful health care legislation. May his HMO protect him!

LARRY ARONOFF
Amherst, New York

TO THE EDITORS:
Armey's Axiom: "Beware of zealots, for they are humorless."

DEAN CLANCY
Senior Policy Advisor
Office of House Majority Leader
Dick Armey
Washington, D.C.

Grandfathered

TO THE EDITORS:
Your article "It Only Gets Better" (Notebook, January 3) has a mistake. "George L. Bush" wouldn't be the first grandson of a president to be elected president. Benjamin Harrison was the first. William Henry Harrison was his grandfather.

DANIEL BERNSTEIN
Age eight
New York, New York

Party on

TO THE EDITORS:
It has become an unfortunate practice for certain individuals or organizations to make statements and/or formulate plans relating to the approaching third millennium and twenty-first century as if that transition were occurring at the beginning of the year 2000. Recent statements of yours, as put forward in your January 3 issue, "The Millennium Dawns," indicate that you have supported that misconception.

The twenty-first century and the third millennium will begin on January 1, 2001. For whatever purpose you are obfuscating the matter by making this error, knowingly or otherwise, please be advised that this does appear to some to be more than a trivial issue. Brushing aside reality may not be a concern for those who merely want an excuse to "party on" as soon as possible; but if you want me to accept as relevant any statements made by your publication on other issues, this fiction you are promoting has subverted that chance.

DAVID M. GRUNDY
Gainesville, Florida

Open admissions

TO THE EDITORS:
Glenn C. Loury makes a strong moral case for special assistance to African Americans and Native Americans given their treatment over several hundred years, even though he is ostensibly arguing for a "color-blind" surrogate for affirmative action ("Admit It," December 27). I fail, however, to see any moral justification for including Hispanics, the great majority of whom have immigrated to this country since the 1950s. Certainly their treatment has not been qualitatively different from that of various Asian immigrants or, for that matter, Italian or Jewish immigrants in earlier generations. Are we simply to take failure to do as well as other groups as a sign that special treatment (even indirectly) is required, thus giving preference to "white" middle-class students with Hispanic surnames over poor, non-Hispanic whites? Are we also to give preferences to Cambodian-Americans over, say, Japanese-Americans? Loury may have reasons why we should do so. His essay offers none. Rather, he stresses the history of black Americans and then applies the same standard to Hispanic Americans without any qualifications.

STANLEY ROTHMAN
Professor Emeritus of Government
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts

Muck and mire, part II

TO THE EDITORS:
David Grann argues that Lenora B. Fulani's alliance with Patrick Buchanan is "the culmination of a 30-year crusade ... to infiltrate the political system" and that it represents a "Marxist takeover" of the "most important American third party of the late twentieth century" ("Coming Soon to a Presidential Campaign Near You," December 13). In what seems to be an involuntary spasm of anti-communism, Grann missed the significance of

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the facts that he uncovered. Fred Newman and his "greatest production" hardly constitute the Red Menace; they are simply political con artists who have found a new and fertile population of targets—namely, the Reform Party and its supporters.

Grann suggests that Fulani might be seeking access to the $12.6 million in federal matching funds that Buchanan's campaign can make available. But, if so, it can't be in order to advance any leftist political views. If that is Fulani's intention, she is defeating her purpose. She demonstrated her capacity to further leftist ideas when she built the New Alliance Party, when she achieved ballot access in all 50 states in her 1988 presidential campaign, when she raised more than $4 million in her 1992 presidential campaign, and when she challenged her exclusion from the nationally televised debates in 1988 and the primary debates in 1992. These actions on her part inspired hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life who believed that Fulani stood for something. And those hundreds of thousands of people have now been disillusioned by Fulani's association with Buchanan. When Newman says that he and Fulani do not have any credibility to lose, he makes clear that he does not think much of all the people who supported Fulani because she articulated a specific social vision, a vision that she does not now advocate while blending into the Reform Party.

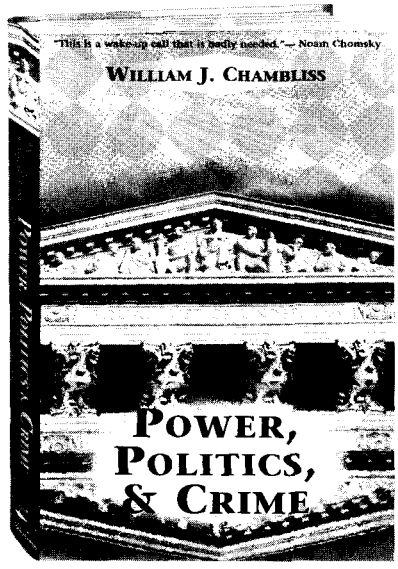
The American public should really take Newman and Fulani at their own word: They stand for no political agenda and they seek to advance no particular social or political vision. Since, by their own admission, their machinations within the Reform Party have nothing to do with ideology or vision, there is only one reason why Newman and Fulani lust for Reform Party hegemony: $$$. Newman will undoubtedly whine that money is the furthest thing from his mind and that he never scammed the Reform Party or its support base. But, then, I vaguely remember a certain leader of the free world insisting that being on the receiving end of fellatio didn't constitute sex. The nagging question was, If it wasn't sex, then why did he do it?

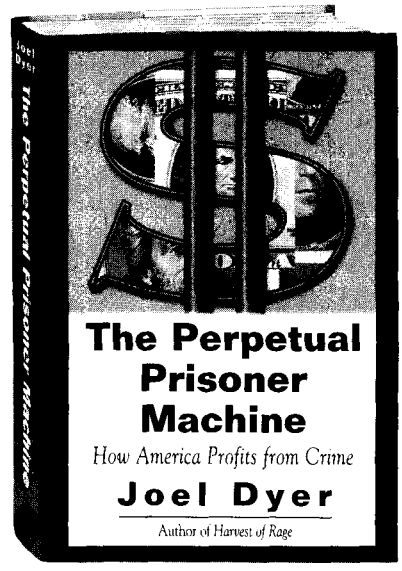
If Fulani's only objective is to get money, the Reform Party is great for that purpose—it is a fund-raiser's heaven, since it can be anything you want it to be. If you want money from a conservative, it can be against "gun control and big government." If you want money from a liberal, it can be for "gay rights and a woman's right to choose." If you want to reach the disaffected, it can be about "cleaning up corruption and a challenge to politics as usual." The party can be all things to all people and not particularly bound to anything at all. Grann quotes some people who were misled by Fulani's organizers. I suppose this is what Fulani means when she says that "issue politics were not given to us by Moses."

So, when politicians don't make clear what they stand for and then say that the day of ideology is over and they want your money or political support, we ought to respond appropriately. I know that when a political person comes to me, my first questions are "What do you stand for and what can you do for me?" The American public should remember that Newman has been quoted in New York's *City Sun* as saying, in response to questions concerning his alleged embezzlement practices, "Money is a form of capitalism; capitalism is a fact of life." Likewise, may I add, financial corruption and political bankruptcy are facts of life under capitalism's electoral system, and Fred Newman is but one of its symptomatic pustules.

KELLIE GASINK
Queens, New York

ARRESTING READING





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—Michael Moore, filmmaker

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Our Gang

In early 1948, Ezer Weizman was a young pilot waiting for Israeli statehood to make him part of an official air force. With Arab attacks under way, Weizman and his fellow pilots dropped supplies on besieged settlements from scarcely functional planes "whose engine[s] hummed with the refrain: 'It's your last flight, your last flight,'" he writes in his autobiography, *On Eagles' Wings*. Because the British were still formally running the country and the flights were illegal, the Jewish pilots pretended to be members of an aviation club. One day, an English plane spotted Weizman flying an obviously military mission. "The criminal," he writes wryly, had no choice but to turn himself in.

A direct line connects Weizman the war hero flouting authority to help save his country with Weizman the elderly president now under police investigation for receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars in allegedly undeclared "gifts" from French businessman Edouard Sarousi while in parliament and the Cabinet. If the charges are true, the old Weizman is only fulfilling the national ethos he learned as a young man: that the elite who risk their lives to serve their country make their own rules.

Suspended for most of its existence between legitimacy and outlawry, the Jewish state encouraged its soldiers to despise legal niceties. The Egyptian army was deploying new radar? Steal a radar station and figure out how it works. The French were embargoing gunboats Israel had already paid for? Send naval crews to France and ferry them home. When Israel bombed Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, the world was outraged; but Israelis didn't need the vindication of the Gulf war to realize that sometimes the real crime is *not* breaking the rules.

The men who most embodied this ethos of righteous recklessness were Weizman and his onetime brother-in-law, Moshe Dayan. Weizman in the air force and Dayan in the army created a world-class military by stressing creativity and individualism, even insubordination. Weizman himself, against explicit orders, stole a plane during the 1948 war because he thought it was needed at the front. Dayan is said to have once remarked that anyone who never sat in the stockade isn't a real soldier.

They carried that ethos into their private lives as well. Dayan was a flagrant adulterer and a pilferer of invaluable antiquities, which he displayed in his garden. During the 1948 war, Weizman and his friends trashed Tel Aviv bars between sorties; once he drove a jeep down the steps of a cinema.

Weizman's and Dayan's outrageous behavior was indulged by a nation of refugees who embraced the sabra wise guys as saviors. The country's survival depended on their vitality. These native-born children of founding families weren't perceived merely as defenders of the state but as its embodiment. They could break the rules because they had invented them. Of course Dayan was entitled to raid archaeological sites: Israel's history belonged to him. When a high-ranking officer wrote to then-Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, pleading with him to pressure Dayan to stop sleeping with the man's wife, Ben-Gurion wrote back that King David had also committed adultery.

That mentality was embedded in the culture of government. The ruling socialist party, Mapai, didn't distinguish between its own interests and Israel's. State land was parceled out to party loyalists; Ben-Gurion used the Shin-Bet (Israel's FBI) to spy on political rivals.

As president, Weizman readily adopted the Ashkenazi elite's tendency to make its own rules. He turned a ceremonial position meant to unify Israelis into a bastion of political power that inflamed the nation's divisions. He attacked Yitzhak Rabin for conceding too much to the Palestinians and then attacked former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for conceding too little; he recently threatened to resign if the nation didn't endorse Ehud Barak's proposed referendum on withdrawing from the Golan Heights. He insulted women, homosexuals, and ultra-Orthodox Jews. He should have been forced to resign long ago, but he got away with everything, just as he always did, because he was Ezer Weizman.

One of the most telling incidents to emerge from the Weizman scandal occurred in 1984. Sarousi, claiming his life was being threatened, asked Weizman to secretly fly him to Israel. Weizman complied, renting a plane and borrowing two pilots from the government's Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI). A spokesman for IAI recently admitted to the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* that it is not company policy to rent planes to citizens. But, he added, "It seems that we could say yes to Weizman."

Given the behavior of the Ashkenazi elite, it was no surprise that Israel's outsiders, when they finally got their turn, began treating the state as an extension of themselves as well. The leaders of the ultra-Orthodox Sephardi Shas party weren't war heroes; most hadn't even served in the army, preferring yeshiva deferments. But they, too, saw themselves as an elite—a spiritual elite, representing "the people" if not "the state"—for whom all was permitted. The Orthodox Sephardi outsiders justified their crude grasping by citing the secular Ashkenazi insiders. The persistent refrain of supporters of Aryeh Deri, the former Shas leader convicted of bribery last March, was that he was only doing what the Ashkenazi "princes" had done all along.

Now it's scandal season in Israel. Netanyahu is being investigated for allegedly keeping gifts he received in office that belong to the state and for his failure to pay a contractor who periodically worked for him, which has led to suspicion of bribery. Barak aides may have violated campaign finance laws. Former Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi is about to be indicted for fraud. Shimon Sheves, director general of the prime minister's office under Rabin, is on trial for bribery. And Ofer Nimrodi, publisher of Israel's second-largest newspaper, *Ma'ariv*, is awaiting trial for attempted conspiracy to murder.

But Weizman's disgrace is by far the most painful, because his recklessness emerges from the essence of Israeliness. The problem with the arrogance that Weizman learned as a young pilot—and that Barak and Netanyahu learned a generation later as officers in the army's most elite commando unit—is that values which help a country win wars undermine it in peacetime. The idealism of the state's embattled early years is largely gone, and what remains of the old Israeli ethos is manipulation. Outlawry has become an Israeli norm: we drive as if no one else belonged on the road, we routinely cheat on our taxes, and violence has moved from our battlefields into our bedrooms.

Weizman—daring and irreverent, charming and vulgar—was our most reliable mirror, the man to whom Israelis looked in order to understand our deepest aspirations. Now, too, Weizman serves as a faithful reflection of Israeli society. The good news is that Israelis are no longer flattered by the image.

YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI is a senior writer for *The Jerusalem Report*.

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Sky's the Limit

ON OCTOBER 4, 1957, the Soviet Union shocked the world by launching *Sputnik I*, the first-ever satellite. Two months later, the United States responded by trying to launch its own satellite. And it failed: the *Vanguard* missile exploded on its launchpad, raining debris and flaming propellant. Yet, even as newscasts showed *Vanguard*'s burning hulk, the Eisenhower administration quietly recommitted the nation to the conquest of space. Weeks after the *Vanguard* fiasco, the U.S. satellite *Explorer I* arched skyward aboard another, cheaper rocket that hadn't even been designed for the satellite launch. Slightly more than a decade later, NASA astronauts were playing golf on the moon.

Talk to advocates of a national missile defense program (NMD—the new, scaled-down name for what was once the Strategic Defense Initiative), and you hear many references to the *Vanguard* explosion. NMD proponents admit that anti-missile tests so far have been underwhelming. But once the president gives the green light to a full-scale missile defense effort, they insist, all that will change—just as the worthless *Vanguard* gave way to the magnificent *Apollo*.

The green light could come as early as this summer. President Clinton has promised to decide by then whether to start building a limited anti-missile system that could, in theory, be deployed by 2005. He should resist the pressure from Congress and his own party and refuse. The reason is simple: There is no remotely feasible anti-missile system to build. To begin production now would waste a colossal amount of money and deceive the American people.

For years the debate over missile defense has been conducted in the language of superpower politics and grand strategy. But the fact remains that, although Washington has poured more than $100 billion into anti-missile research, the gizmos do not yet work. Orbital laser stations and space-based "brilliant pebbles," the two leading anti-missile ideas of the Reagan decade, have been abandoned even by their supposed proponents. THAAD, the Army's attempt to build a "theater" anti-missile missile to protect troop formations, has been a total bust—zero for five in recent tests. Airborne Laser, the Air Force's flying anti-missile turret aboard a modified 747, may someday work for tactical-range missions, but its beam possesses only a fraction of the power necessary to fire across the strategic distances required to knock down intercontinental ballistic missiles. The latest idea, an anti-missile "kill vehicle" designed to hone in on a warhead and smash it to smithereens via collision, flunked a much-anticipated test last week.

And technology isn't the only problem. There's also the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), which bars both the United States and the former Soviet states from deploying strategic anti-missile batteries. Republicans scoff at the ABM as a worthless sheet of paper and a peacenik concept—though the treaty was negotiated by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. George W. Bush has said that as president he might unilaterally cancel it. As Richard Perle, a former Reagan administration official and now an adviser to Bush, recently explained to *The New York Times*, the end of the cold war means that "the treaty is no longer necessary."

So much for the right's supposed commitment to maintaining American "credibility" overseas. The United States promised not to build a missile defense, and our promises are supposed to mean something. America should not simply cancel the ABM—much better to renegotiate it with the Russians. This can be done. The cold war fear that an anti-missile system would be destabilizing, because it might allow one country to survive a surprise first strike against the other, no longer holds. Surely financial incentives or other goodies would convince the former Soviet states to accept a U.S. system that could only work against small-scale threats from states such as North Korea. (NMD proponents acknowledge that no system could block an all-out nuclear attack by an advanced nation.) Getting the Russians' consent on the ABM is particularly important because the Duma still has not ratified the START II nuclear arms reduction treaty. And the dismantling of huge numbers of Russian warheads is at least as important to U.S. national security as any anti-missile gizmo.

If scientists learn to devise an effective anti-missile system, the United States must build it. And, if the Russians endlessly refuse to renegotiate the ABM, we will ultimately have to go ahead over their objections. The potential threat from a North Korean or Iraqi atomic or biological bomb is simply too great. But the system has to work, and we should try to deploy it without damaging our already deteriorating relationship with Russia. Today, both technology and diplomacy say the time is not yet right. Only politics says it is. ■

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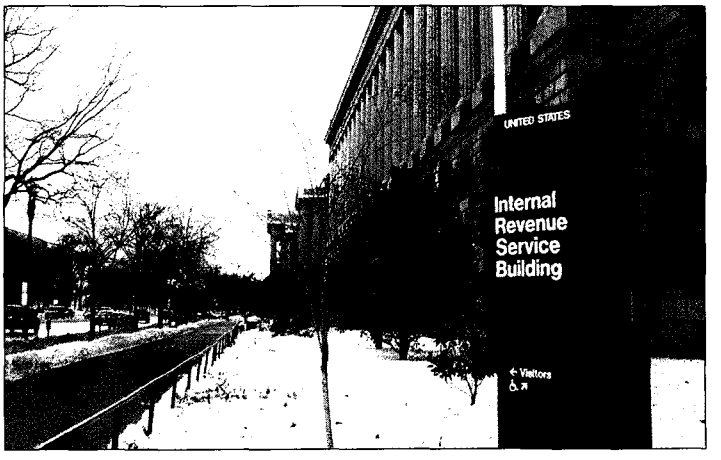
REMEMBERING TO FORGET: "What the people of the [Democratic Republic of the Congo] now require from this session of the Security Council is not more talks of sending observers to their country ... but the urgent dispatching of peacekeepers." So demanded President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, one of seven African presidents invited to participate in a U.N. Security Council special session last week—a session to help end the gruesome, seven-nation war in the Congo. Before the session, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan called on the Security Council to send 5,500 people to the region—including 500 military observers and 3,400 troops to protect them. But the United States—which, amid great hype, has declared its new focus on Africa—slammed the door. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, that great partisan of U.S. intervention in her home region of Eastern Europe, declared that the United States would not support a peacekeeping mission until the warring parties "detail in a credible fashion their plans for meeting the commitments they have made" in a July cease-fire agreement that hasn't held. This dubious declaration represents a fairly naked attempt at delay by an administration that fears that the American people don't have the stomach for another peacekeeping mission so soon after Kosovo (particularly, though they'd never say it out loud, in Africa). In March 1998, when President Clinton visited Rwanda and tried to make amends for his inaction in the face of genocide there, he declared, "We must have global vigilance. And never again must we shy in the face of the evidence." Tell it to the Congolese.

FIRST IN THE NATION: Even before many Iowans actually held their caucuses, the networks, using entrance-poll results, were jousting to be first to declare the victors. The winner: MSNBC, which issued its official projections at 8:25 p.m. EST. CNN made its calls two minutes later, also very early in the evening. Perhaps too early. For, while its entrance poll correctly predicted that George W. Bush would win the Republican caucus, some of the poll's other findings were a bit, well, unusual. CNN found that, of those voters who said world affairs was the issue most important to them, 40 percent would vote for Steve Forbes, a candidate who hardly ever speaks about international affairs and has no experience making foreign policy. Nearly 60 percent of those who considered abortion the most important issue said they would vote for Bush, even though his conservative rivals relentlessly blast him for waffling on the topic, and he speaks about it only under duress. Weirder still, among those voters who considered the ability "to win in November" paramount, Forbes came in first, with nearly a third of the total, followed by Bush and Alan Keyes, who each garnered around a quarter. Keyes might be passionate, but he has absolutely no chance of winning in November, and to vote for him on that basis is bizarre. Then again, of the voters whose most important candidate characteristic was rejection of "typical politics," eight times as many favored the center-leaning Bush as preferred the infinitely more anti-establishment Keyes. Sure, polling is an inexact science, but these results are simply incoherent. Either CNN needs to work on its polling techniques or Iowa's caucus voters need to work on their sanity.

STILL STANDING

"Come Monday night, the tax code will be history."
—Steve Forbes, Sunday, January 23, the day before the Iowa caucuses.



Washington, D.C., Tuesday, January 25.

IT ONLY GETS WORSE: Of course, if CNN's polls were correct *and* Iowa voters were in their right minds, then things may be even worse for Bill Bradley than the Iowa delegate count would indicate. Campaign finance reform is supposedly one of Bradley's big advantages over Al Gore. Bradley made a big bipartisan show of meeting with the cause's celeb, John McCain, in New Hampshire a few weeks ago. But, according to CNN's entrance poll, 75 percent of voters who said they cared most about campaign finance went for Gore; only 21 percent voted for Bradley. On health care, the other issue on which Bradley has staked his "big idea" against Gore's incrementalism, the results are almost as baffling. Only 33 percent of voters who touted health care as their chief concern favored Bradley, compared to 56 percent for Gore. If Bradley hangs on until the New York primary on March 7 and then reads polls showing that Gore swept voters who say they're Knicks fans, then he'll really know it's time to call it a day.

ALL IN THE FAMILY: George W. Bush hasn't been shy about using his family in his presidential campaign. He tapped his father's network of donors to help raise $67 million. He sent his mother to New Hampshire a few weeks back to drum up votes. He has even used one of his daughters for campaign grist. In his book *A Charge to Keep*, Bush, perhaps trying to lend a little compassion to his own pro-capital-punishment stance and Texas's overworked electric chair, mentions his daughter's antipathy to the death penalty. "Two days

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before Karla Faye Tucker's scheduled execution," Bush wrote, "one of my own daughters, obviously troubled by this case, looked up at the dinner table and told me she had decided she opposes capital punishment. I told her I was proud that she was thinking about the issue, that she had a right and a responsibility to make her own judgments, and she should always feel free to express her opinion. I welcomed the moment." Bizarre, then, that last week in Iowa Bush blew up at a reporter who, referencing the split between progeny and father on capital punishment, asked about the Bush daughter's position on abortion. "I'm not going to talk about my daughters' point of view," Bush said heatedly. "I appreciate you respecting their privacy." Perhaps he needs to take his own advice.

REST THEIR CASE: When Elián González's grandmothers granted CNN an interview on January 25, they had already had an entire day in the United States to hone their story. But, just as they began tugging at our heartstrings by describing what they'd do when they saw Elián ("I don't know if tomorrow when we see him if I will be able to say anything, if I will cry, if I will laugh," said one), they undermined the poignancy of their tale by airing a bizarre conspiracy theory. When CNN asked Raquel Rodríguez, Elián's maternal grandmother, whether her daughter, who drowned at sea while trying to flee Cuba for the United States, would want her son to remain here, she replied, "The child got here to this country against the will of his mother because his mother came compelled and threatened. That's how they brought her. And so that she may rest in peace, the child has to go back." We agree that family ties should trump nationalistic claims and that Elián should return to his father. But his mother's rest will not be any more peaceful if her death is manipulated for political ends. And his grandmother's paranoid embellishment will only alienate American viewers by linking her heartfelt pleas to Castro's fanatic pronouncements about a scheming Miami mafia. Elián's grandmothers should stick to their hopes of someday embracing their grandchild. Sometimes it's best to let the justness of your cause do the talking. ■

VINT'S WEEK

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Paris Dispatch

Unlimited Appetite

By JON HENLEY

IT MUST BE a bit of a downer for a new boss. You take over a fairly disreputable international organization, begin to shake the place up a little—and, bingo, your staff starts a hunger strike.

But, two months after his confirmation as director-general of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, that's what happened to Japanese diplomat Koichiro Matsuura.

Mild of manner but determined of deed, Matsuura, who was elected UNESCO's director-general by a comfortable majority in October, lost no time in putting a few wrongs right at the Paris headquarters of the United Nations' most widely criticized body. He suspended a slew of appointments and promotions (71 in all) made by his Spanish predecessor, Federico Mayor, in the closing weeks of Mayor's checkered twelve-year reign, and decided he would not renew 23 temporary contracts that expired at the end of December.

Not, one would have thought, the stuff from which rebellions spring, particularly at an outfit so profoundly mired in corruption, nepotism, and malpractice that it makes the United Nations itself look like a shining star of honest efficiency. But that's not the way Bruno de Padirac and Brinda Runghen saw it. De Padirac, who had gone on a hunger strike twice before during his 23 years at UNESCO, is one of the staffers Mayor promoted in his last-minute munificence. Runghen is a temporary hire whose contract was not renewed. Both, perhaps understandably, disliked Matsuura's methods. And, in what they said was a crusade for "democracy and justice," for two weeks they camped out in UNESCO's main concourse, refusing to eat. "I cannot accept that the organization is entering the third millennium with obsolete management methods and a quasi-totalitarian staff policy, in complete contradiction with UNESCO's ideals," de Padirac said in a statement to his fellow staff.

Which neatly raises the question of what exactly UNESCO's ideals are. The organization's mission, when it was founded amid the ashes of World War II, was "to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture" so as "to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law ... and for fundamental freedoms." Laudable ideals, to be sure, but rather broad. And impossible to achieve when the organization entrusted with achieving them is a colossal mess.

The political and budgetary troubles that prompted Britain and the United States to leave UNESCO in mid-1980, claiming it was terminally inefficient and controlled by a Third World–Soviet conspiracy, have been partly resolved. Britain has rejoined, and the Clinton administration has stated its willingness to do so. But UNESCO's problems remain legion. It is prone to internecine squabbling, mismanagement, overpoliticization, a top-heavy bureaucracy, and an utterly utopian vagueness. It suffers from serious delusions of grandeur: when one of Mayor's pet projects, the "Culture of Peace" program, was launched, the accompanying publicity video described it as an idea "comparable to the one dreamed up by a young man in Galilee 2,000 years ago."

UNESCO's two-year budget, provided by its 188 member states and the private sector, amounts to nearly $800 million. For that money, the world gets programs with names like "World Teachers' Day"; "Presenting and Revitalizing Our Intangible Heritage"; and "Planet Society, a Worldwide Exchange Network for a New Art of Living on Earth." There may be excellent work going on behind those words, but nobody really knows: according to an independent audit by the Canadian government, UNESCO rarely evaluates the cost-effectiveness of individual programs, elicits feedback, requires systematic reports on performance, or sets specific objectives.

Inside headquarters, staff members say, nepotism and cronyism are rife. Mistresses, nephews, and even the illegitimate son of a former Cabinet minister from a major European power are among those currently benefiting from handsome, tax-free UNESCO salaries. According to the audit, up to 40 percent of recent appointments and promotions did not meet UNESCO's own rules and regulations. Under Mayor's regime, the organization also hired hundreds of "consultants" and "special advisers." The Canadian audit, leaked to the press late last year, said the consultants' ill-defined tasks often duplicated those of regular staff members. Nor could the auditors find, anywhere in UNESCO, a complete list of special advisers or their total cost. The organization now has so many consultants, advisers, and bosses—the number of assistant directors-general has nearly tripled in the past decade, while the number of directors jumped from a handful to nearly 200—that it can no longer afford to hire the dedicated young professionals it needs to run its programs.

THIS IS, OF COURSE, a shame. The finest of UNESCO's programs, which identify the best practices in the fields of education and research and help spread them to areas of the planet that need them, are worthwhile. And Matsuura, who started his career at the Japanese foreign affairs ministry and has served as ambassador to Andorra, Djibouti, and, most recently, France, knows this. He headed what is perhaps the most valuable UNESCO program—the World Heritage Organization—for one year before being elected director-general in October. He has pledged to narrow UNESCO's focus, trim it of excess weight, and render it open, transparent, and efficient. He has said UNESCO must concentrate on those areas where it has a comparative advantage over other U.N. bodies: basic education, particularly literacy programs, and ethics in science and cyberspace. He has

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promised to restore good management.

And he has made a good start. He has sacked a few dozen of Mayor's "special advisers"; frozen the rash of new appointments and promotions, pending investigation; and taken the first steps toward resolving a projected $10 million budget overrun. He has also ordered an independent audit of what many insiders feel is a Pandora's box of sleaze: a large pot of cash doled out at whim by the hierarchy and known as the "Participation Program."

In a letter to the staff last week, Matsuura said that UNESCO must "rub out the debts of the past" and appealed for reason. The staff has since decided to cut him some slack, and de Padirac and Runghen have finally called off their hunger strike—for now. As Matsuura recently acknowledged, "Some people who are adversely affected will inevitably criticize me." If only that were all they did. ■

Quito Dispatch

Jungle Fever

By CATHERINE ELTON

FOR A MOMENT last week, it seemed as if Latin America's bad old days were back. A camouflage-clad general strode onto the balcony of Ecuador's presidential palace to celebrate a coup d'état, while crowds cheered below.

And then things returned to normal. Only hours after a three-man junta ousted Ecuador's immensely unpopular president, Jamil Mahuad, the military bowed to international pressure and handed power to Mahuad's vice president, Gustavo Noboa. The Clinton administration breathed a sigh of relief, and the U.S. press noted approvingly that military rule in Latin America was, indeed, a thing of the past.

But what happened here last week wasn't a military coup in the normal sense. And the media's comments largely missed the point. The maverick military officers who seized and then abandoned power didn't act on their own initiative. They responded, at the last minute, to a monthlong indigenous protest that brought Ecuador's political system to its knees. And the real power behind their short-lived triumvirate was Antonio Vargas, an Amazon Quechua Indian and president of Ecuador's federation of indigenous organizations, which organized the demonstrations. Never in the history of Latin America has an indigenous movement come as close to taking power as did Vargas's supporters last week. They did it by pursuing a strategy radically unlike those of the other protest movements across Latin America. And it is they—not the military—who pose the real challenge to Ecuador's flawed democracy.

Like most of its Andean neighbors, Ecuador is characterized by glaring disparities between its impoverished and historically powerless indigenous peoples and the country's fairer-skinned mestizos and descendants of European colonists. But, unlike those neighbors, Ecuador has seen its Indians develop into a major political force in recent years. According to Fernando García, who studies indigenous issues at a local think tank, civil wars between the government and leftist guerrillas have stymied indigenous political organization in Guatemala, Colombia, and Peru. For decades a strong indigenous movement in Bolivia was represented by labor unions, but when union power declined in the late '80s, the indigenous movement declined as well. Mexico's sheer size has complicated nationwide organizing, and government outreach has co-opted indigenous organizations.

By contrast, Ecuador is a small nation, and its capital is in the mountains, where a large part of the indigenous population lives. Ecuador's indigenous movement, called Pachakutik, has resisted overtures from the government or from any political party and has developed an independent, highly effective organizational structure. That organizational muscle has been growing since the '80s. It reached its zenith last week, when roughly 5,000 Indians descended upon Quito, transforming the city's landscape with their brightly colored ponchos, traditional beaded jewelry, and bowler hats. Then, on January 21, they stormed the Ecuadorean congress. The military, shaken by the size of the protests and unhappy with Mahuad itself, split. Junior officers refused to put the demonstrations down and then joined Vargas in a short-lived junta before buckling under U.S. pressure.

ONE REASON FOR the junior officers' decision not to intervene may have been the support the indigenous movement enjoys among all Ecuadoreans—a rare accomplishment in a country long divided along class and racial lines. Flash polling taken by the Gallup-affiliated group Cedatos showed that 71 percent of the country supported the uprising. Pachakutik, unlike other Latin American protest movements, is basically nonviolent, which makes it less threatening to Ecuador's middle class. "We have decided that the fight will be a peaceful one. The masses took to the streets to protest and paralyzed the country. It is much different and much greater than the armed struggle," Vargas bellowed to a gathering of supporters and journalists a few days after the coup. According to Vargas, his movement has learned what not to do from the failures of violent social movements in Central America and Colombia. Even last week's coup, Vargas boasted, was bloodless.

Pachakutik also wins popular support because it is internally democratic, organized around a system of "parliaments" in each province. These assemblies, which meet regularly to discuss strategy, have provided the Ecuadorean indigenous movement with a high degree of unity. After the coup was dissolved, Vargas refused to say what the movement planned next, stating that such decisions could be made only after the parliaments meet.

Its institutional democracy aside, of course, Pachakutik's participation in the military coup was a blow to Ecuadorean democracy. But Ecuador's brutal economic crisis has made the movement more radical and more desperate. For years,

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Pachakutik has demanded a more equitable distribution of wealth, an end to government corruption, and an end to the impunity that corrupt officials enjoy. More specifically, it has protested the sale of state-run industries to private investors.

That agenda has gained popular support as Ecuador has slid into its worst economic crisis in history. In one year the exchange rate has gone from 7,000 sucres to the dollar to 25,000. Two-thirds of Ecuadoreans no longer hold full-time jobs. Inflation last year reached a region-high 60 percent, while the economy shrank by seven percent.

The economic crisis has hit Ecuador's four million Indians—almost all of whom live below the poverty level and only one percent of whom go to college—particularly hard. But the breaking point was Mahuad's early January decision to replace the national currency with the dollar. While the plan's defenders say it is the only way to reignite foreign investment and pull the country out of recession, Mahuad's foes claim it will drastically increase prices, devastating the 60 percent of the nation that already lives below the poverty level.

Despite popular support for his agenda, many see Vargas's decision to seek power undemocratically as rash and self-defeating. Even he admits that "we may have gone too fast, and we have to evaluate this." As Garcia notes, Pachakutik was making progress through the Ecuadorean political system. It already boasts eight mayors and six of the country's 121 congressional representatives. In the municipal elections scheduled for this May, the movement might have done even better.

ECUADOR'S NEW PRESIDENT, Noboa, is clearly trying to entice the Indians back into the democratic process. On his second day in office, he addressed the indigenous movement in a televised interview. "The indigenous people have suffered, but their tactics were wrong. They did this because of their necessity to have more life options, and their complaints are valid," he said. But Noboa also vows to push ahead with "dollarization." And, given the desperate state of the Ecuadorean economy, Vargas's supporters may have lost faith in the slow give-and-take of democratic politics. So far, they have refused to recognize Noboa's presidency and are evaluating whether even to accept his offer of dialogue.

If they refuse, Ecuador could be headed for chaos, as Indians mount new assaults on the capital. It also seems unlikely that Pachakutik will be able to repeat its recent success. The military appears chastened by the world's reaction to the coup, and polls show that, while Ecuadoreans supported the demonstrations, they are eager to see constitutional order restored.

Indeed, if Vargas and his supporters try once again to seize power, Ecuador may become simply another Latin American nation wracked by violence and bitterly divided by race and class. But, if they return to democratic politics with an economic agenda and a set of political reforms that speak to the frustrations of people all over this suffering country, Ecuador might even develop a democracy that is more equitable and more secure than the one it has today. And that, far more than any state-department protest, would keep Ecuador's generals from the balcony of the presidential palace. ■

Out of Iowa

Escape Hatch

By JONATHAN CHAIT

THE IGNOMINY OF a hopeless presidential bid—the lonely Iowa roads, the apathetic locals, the pitying reporters—takes a rare psyche to withstand. Those determined enough to endure it typically fall into two categories. First, there is the optimistic schemer (think Lamar Alexander) animated by a vaguely plausible victory scenario and a few million dollars raised from donors gullible enough to buy it. Then there is the ideological fanatic (think Alan Keyes) who soldiers on not to win but to use the campaign to promote his heartfelt, oddball theories.

But neither category explains the recently euthanized candidacy of Orrin Hatch. Hatch never offered any scenario—even one involving multiple opponent fatalities—that ended with him in the White House. Moreover, his political leanings place him squarely within the GOP mainstream. It was an inexplicable candidacy, and it began in obscurity and ended in groveling.

The conventionality of Hatch's views and the bleakness of his prospects combined to create an air of absurdity. His campaign dutifully reproduced the trappings of mainstream presidential politics—the courting of donors, the spinning of polls—but on a pathetically reduced scale, thus unintentionally satirizing these rituals. Hatch began his run by cultivating fellow members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This proved a surprisingly tepid base of support, and so he moved on to an even more tenuous connection: chiropractors. Apparently Hatch, who is plagued by back trouble, has pushed pro-chiropractor legislation in the Senate, and he promised a gathering of Iowa chiropractors that "[i]f you elect me president, you're going to have the best friend chiropractors ever had in the White House." More recently, Hatch began citing a letter of endorsement from Pierre Salinger, the former JFK press secretary now best-known for arguing that the Navy intentionally shot down TWA Flight 800. Hatch's coalition of Mormons, chiropractors, and conspiracy theorists never lifted him above one percent in the polls.

The caricature was even more pronounced on Hatch's website. Campaign sites are supposed to display a succession of endorsements and climbing poll numbers, creating an impression of unstoppable momentum. An October headline from the Utah senator's homepage, "HATCH NIPS BUSH IN WYOMING POLL," showed a glint of promise. But, when you read the story, it turned out that it was not an opinion poll but a straw poll, and not even a straw poll of all Wyoming Republicans but of the Western States Republican Leadership Conference, and that, furthermore, Hatch did not actually win it. He finished second—as the story put it, "nipping at the heels of George W. Bush." After

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this, even trumped-up victories could not be found, and the headlines grew progressively more desperate: "HATCH UNFAZED BY UNDERDOG STATUS"; "HATCH HOPES TO GIVE THE POLLS AN ADJUSTMENT"; "HATCH HAS BONE TO PICK WITH THE MEDIA IN CAMPAIGN."

By the night of the Iowa caucus, a Hatch staffer said the candidate hoped to finish fourth. But even this meager aspiration proved wildly unrealistic. As it turned out, Hatch finished last, with about one-fourteenth as many votes as Keyes.

MOST CANDIDATES IN such desperate straits swing for the fences—they go after the rivals ahead of them. But not Hatch. Bizarrely, he pursued a kind of general-election strategy—focusing his attacks on Al Gore and Bill Bradley, men he had absolutely no chance of ever running against. Hatch put a large chunk of his meager bank account into a half-hour infomercial excoriating the Clinton administration. "I'm really concerned about beating Al Gore and Bill Bradley. They are far left," he told one debate audience. "I really want to see the Clinton-Gore team go," he repeated at another point. This is hardly a reason to vote for Hatch, since it is a view shared by all Republicans, almost by definition. Indeed, if electing a Republican is the paramount issue, then Hatch's argument pointed toward uniting behind the popular front-runner.

And it was just about this time that Hatch began relentlessly sucking up to Bush. During the December 6 debate, Hatch told Bush, "I think minority parents owe you, and I think Republicans owe you. You've been a great governor." After musing briefly about Bush's inexperience, Hatch announced, "That's why I'm thinking of you as a vice presidential candidate. Because if you had—just think, just think—Ronald Reagan picked your father because he had foreign policy experience." This sounded more like the case for Bush-Hatch than vice versa.

At times it seemed as if Hatch's presidential campaign had lost any purpose save allowing him to network with Bush. In debates, Hatch's lauding of his "experience" and "getting things done" looked a bit like a job interview with Bush in front of a TV audience. Hatch, it's true, isn't a likely veep choice—but he could be in line for a top Cabinet post. And, if that's what he really wanted all along, his campaign provided a brilliant way for him to get close to the party's anointed nominee. As a senator from Utah, Hatch had little opportunity to interact with a busy man like Bush. But, as a fellow candidate, Hatch was entitled to a spot in the debates and, thus, hours of face time during which to tout his qualifications and prove his loyalty.

Hatch continued his sycophancy in his withdrawal speech. After perfunctorily thanking his staff and his wife—"She's great," he noted, giving her shoulder a squeeze—he went on to lavish praise upon Bush. "My esteem for George W. Bush has grown every day that I've been on the campaign," Hatch said, calling him "the best person we possibly can have." So, a reporter asked, does Hatch want a spot on the ticket? "I don't think anybody's going to offer that to me," he demurred. "I'll do whatever I can." He already has. ■

Out of Iowa

Entrenched Warfare

By DAVID GRANN

I FINALLY GRASPED what Bill Bradley meant by Iowa's "entrenched power" when I saw the man on horseback. John Tuttle, Warren County's Democratic Party chairman and a Gore supporter, had driven me all the way across Des Moines, past the townships of St. Mary's and Otter, past the DEAD END sign and the place where the land dips and rises into an endless field and the pavement turns to soil, just to find him. He had on a hat and sat back in the saddle, the tips of his mustache slightly frozen. "How you doing?" Tuttle asked, pulling up alongside him. "I'm doing just fine," the man replied.

Tuttle then took a long cardboard tube and a white envelope out from the backseat. "I got some Gore materials here they asked me to drop off," he said. The horse lowered its head and sniffed the envelope, which said in big, bold letters: GORE 2000. IMPORTANT CAUCUS INFORMATION. OPEN IMMEDIATELY. The horseman slipped the materials under his arm, then rode off. It was at this point that I knew Bradley was in trouble.

The man on the horse was part of Gore's sprawling underground operation. He was not an official "precinct captain," someone appointed by the Democratic Party to run the caucuses. Instead, Gore's campaign had designated him as a de facto one, along with scores of others, to ensure that on the night of the caucus every town meeting had a Gore plant, someone to steer the voting in the vice president's direction. "They're playing a bit of a double game," acknowledged Tuttle.

Unlike ordinary elections, the Democratic Iowa caucuses are a byzantine process in which voters publicly state their candidate preference and then try to persuade members of the other camps to change their minds. Tuttle, as a pro-Gore county chairman, was in charge of making sure Gore supporters captured every caucus in his region—that in the icy cold they came to cajole their neighbors to vote for the vice president. After meeting the man on horseback, we went to see a "horse doctor" in Belmont, an old man in a chapeau who had once caucused for Harry Truman. After that, we visited an 84-year-old farmer in Liberty who, like the man on horseback, was designated by the Gore campaign as a buffer against a rogue precinct captain.

And, while Tuttle worked the countryside, the unions worked the larger cities. On the night before the caucuses, a caravan of AFL-CIO supporters, some from as far away as Washington, D.C., descended on the Firestone plant on the outskirts of Des Moines. As the temperature dropped close to zero and smoke from the factory filled the sky with clouds,

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they handed out leaflets emblazoned with Gore's photo. "If you're organized and turn out the vote," said Mary Rosenthal, who had come from Minnesota, "you can completely control the caucuses in Iowa." Indeed, in the campaign's final weeks, Iowa's local unions spent thousands of dollars to counter Bradley's early surge. They sent out, among other things, a video from John Sweeney endorsing Gore and some 25,000 laminated flyers that read, "Al Gore is the only candidate." When I visited Tuttle's house, the pamphlets were stacked on his kitchen table. "The unions are going to help carry us," he said.

Like the Gore campaign, labor found its own men on horseback, people it trained to control a cryptic process that Gore, in his failed presidential bid in 1988, called "an arcane procedure that produces crazy results." The AFL-CIO's special guide to the caucus, titled "Precinct Caucus Education," tries to explain, for example, the equation that determines how caucus votes translate into delegates. (Unlike voters in primaries, caucusgoers don't vote directly for candidates; they vote for delegates who will represent their candidate at the convention.) "The allocation is determined by multiplying the number in each preference group by the total number of delegates to be elected and then dividing by the number of total eligible caucus attenders," the brochure states. "The result is rounded up at .5 and down at less than .5." The guide recommends that you consult the Caucus Mathematics Worksheet and bring a calculator. A stalemate is resolved by more primitive means: "In a case where two or more preference groups are tied for the same additional delegate, a coin should be tossed to award the delegate to one of the preference groups."

Along with the rules, the unions provided their members with a dummy speech to deliver at the caucus: "My name is (your name).... I support Vice President Al Gore and believe his support of workers and working family issues make him the best candidate for the office of President of the United States. Al Gore supports improved education for our children and grandchildren ... Al Gore supports the rights of workers to organize into unions."

"I think we got everything covered," Tuttle said on the morning of the caucus. To see just how much, I drove that evening to Cumming, a town of about 150 people. When I asked at a gas station for directions, the man said, "Just follow the pavement. You won't miss it unless you run off the road." The caucus was held at the American Legion Hall, in the center of a town that consists of about three buildings, including the local pub. The hall is a tiny brick building, no more than 30 feet by 30 feet, lined with artifacts from World War II.

When I arrived, there was already a huge GORE 2000 placard on the door. The walls had posters of the vice president as well, but then several Bradley people started filing in and put up their own signs. Chuck Spain, a 72-year-old retired schoolteacher, had told me earlier that Bradley was the only one "who speaks the language of the common man." I asked him if anything could change his mind. "I don't think so," he said. Another woman said she was on the fence but leaning toward Bradley.

Soon the room was filled. There were farmers, teachers, insurance agents, bankers. One man wore a silver jacket that said UNITED STEEL WORKERS. When I asked him why he

backed Gore, he said the vice president was the only one who "supports workers and working family issues" and "the education of our children." As the meeting began, it seemed that Gore had a slight edge but also that Bradley's forces could pull off an upset if they pried loose some people from the Gore camp. The precinct captain rang the bell, and everyone rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. I looked around the room for a plant, but with the exception of the labor representative, who seemed oddly quiet, there didn't appear to be one.

Then, just before everyone broke into camps, the door opened and a tall man entered the room. He had silver hair and a long, drawn face and wore an elegant vest and jacket. Everyone turned to him in silence. Then someone said, "Hello, Senator. It's an honor."

The plant was Iowa Senator Tom Harkin, who had grown up down the road. "If you want to have a couple of minutes...," the precinct captain offered deferentially. At first Harkin didn't say much. But, once the group splintered into loose camps, he spoke eloquently about how he had known Gore for more than 20 years, how he had fought with him against the Gingrich revolution and for the small farmer and the elderly. "You know where I've been on rural issues, and Gore has been right there with me," he said. "I knew his father." There was no need to browbeat. By evening's end Gore had seven of the ten delegates.

"I don't think that's right," said Bradley supporter Mary Johnson about Harkin's politicking. "We don't have Bill here." But few others seemed to mind. When I asked the precinct captain why he had voted for Gore, he joked, "If I didn't, Tom would take a bite out of my ass." A young man with a Gore sticker said he had gone with the vice president because he knew Harkin didn't have "anything up his pant leg." Even Spain, who had initially said he didn't think he would change sides, said Harkin's riff on Gore's education efforts had convinced him. "We got 70 percent of the delegates," Harkin told me proudly.

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BILL RUSSELL

But there was something odd about the vote. Over the course of the night, few people spoke much about Gore. One woman who had voted for him said he was "presentable." Another said, "I can't say I'm passionate about him." Later, when I went to Norwalk High School, where Tuttle was receiving the county results on two cell phones—"Two to one," he exclaimed, "two to one!"—I asked a man wearing a Gore sticker if he was excited about the candidate. "Well . . . ," he said, hesitating, and then fell silent.

The Gore campaign had massively overcome the stumbles of 1999. It had become the juggernaut everyone expected when the race began. But I couldn't tell whether Gore had really awakened voters or merely the Democratic machine, a machine able to dominate a system in which only a slim fraction of the eligible voters participate. When Tuttle got off the phone, he looked at me and asked, "What's that word they called us?" I looked at him, confused. "Entrenched . . . ," he said. "Entrenched power?" I suggested.

"That's it," he said with a smile. ■

Out of Iowa

Ice Capades

By MICHELLE COTTLE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 10 a.m. It's 20 degrees, the streets are an icy death trap, and there are two men in fuzzy pink pig costumes perched in a white convertible outside my hotel. One of the pigs, for some unfathomable reason, is waving a sign that says TAX MEAT. Presumably they're trying to send a message to Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, who is at the hotel bar presiding over one of the final events of his dying presidential quest. Under normal circumstances, I would pause to investigate. But this is pre-caucus weekend in Des Moines, and men in livestock costumes stalking presidential candidates are a common sight. Besides, I have only three hours to reach the eastern edge of the state, where Texas Governor George W. Bush is appearing at the Davenport Holiday Inn in a last-minute push to suck up to as many Iowa voters as possible.

Ordinarily, I would cringe at the prospect of driving 170 miles past nothing but silos and snow-covered cows to hear a canned stump speech. But winter road travel in Iowa is the ultimate extreme sport—much like scaling K2 without a safety line. Despite snowy conditions, the average driving speed is 85 miles per hour. The supposedly sedate Midwestern natives hurtle past, slinging mud, rocks, and huge hunks of ice at your windshield. Every so often, a big rig going Mach 3 catches an icy patch, which sends it careening wildly onto the shoulder and then back into your lane. Smaller vehicles hit the ice and simply jet off the highway. During the drive east, I count no fewer than six vehicles abandoned in snowbanks.

By the time I reach Davenport, the crowd at the Holiday Inn is restless. Many people have been waiting more than an hour to hear George W. They are hungry, their legs are tired, and their kids are starting to whine. Members of Bush's advance team are rounding up chairs for the elderly. Up near the stage, a group of young people is trying to lead the room in pro-W. cheers, shaking signs and colorful paper pom-poms supplied by the campaign. But most of those in attendance are having none of it. "Alan Keyes shows up on time for his events," sniffs one woman.

But when the candidate at last steps up to the podium, sporting a spiffy new haircut and a "glad to see ya" smirk, he knows precisely how to warm up the room. The time is near, intones W., his voice rising in anticipation of the response, for Iowans to send a signal about how Republicans will "end the Clinton era in Washington, D.C.!" Whoo-hoo! The crowd goes wild. And, in the blink of a pig's eye, all is forgiven.

SINCE WINNING THE state's straw poll last August, Bush has spent a sizable chunk of time and money ingratiating himself with the people of Iowa. He has talked about taxes and trade and Social Security and defense. He has bowed to the god of ethanol and, when backed into a corner, has voiced support for the Republican Party's anti-abortion plank—a hot topic among heartland conservatives. Still, more than a year after the impeachment unpleasantness, what really gets Iowa conservatives' juices flowing is the belief that George W. will wipe away the stain Bill Clinton has left on the White House. In a campaign ostensibly about issues, Clinton is, in fact, the only issue that really ignites the Bush fans in Davenport (and Ames and Cedar Rapids). For his talk about free trade, tax cuts, and revamping the military, W. gets solid but not passionate applause. But when he pledges to be "a commander-in-chief who earns the respect of the men and women" in the Armed Forces—a clear slap at our draft-

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dodging, intern-fondling Bill—the audience roars. Similar howls of approval greet Bush's vow to restore "honor and dignity" to the Oval Office. Forget "Clinton fatigue"; these voters haven't tired of Clinton-bashing one bit.

After the speechifying, the crowd seems sated, and W. has even won over a few fence-sitters. "I was mixed between him and Steve Forbes," says Paul McCoy. "But Bush has such a dynamic personality." "There's such sincerity in him, which you see in person much more than on TV," gushes Roy Kapteina, who drove in with his wife, Sharon, from nearby Muscatine. "His honesty really comes across," says Sharon, noting that Forbes, by contrast, "does not interact well with people." "And Forbes has a really wimpy handshake," adds Roy.

Five hours later, at a Bush rally on the outskirts of Cedar Rapids, supporters offer similar testimonies to the candidate's winning personality. "He's easy to talk to," says Dave Webster, one of a handful of early arrivals milling about the giant hangar at PS Air. "He's laid-back, relaxed. He has a friendly smile—people like that out here." As show time approaches, I wander over to where three young women, positively mouth-watering in snug black T-shirts with BUSH 2000 printed in silver across the front, have been charming some of the male campaign workers. The trio is part of Bush's youth council and has been organizing students throughout the state. "He has what it takes to win the White House over for the Republicans," says University of Iowa junior Liz Crokin. "A lot of it has to do with his superficial appeal," she explains. "He's younger. He's charismatic. He's a great-looking guy. And, when you talk with him, you feel like he's talking on your level, like he doesn't feel superior." Again, the verve-challenged Forbes is invoked as a foil: "Forbes just doesn't have the appeal," she says with a guilty smile. "He's robotic. Stiff. It may be unfortunate that we have to elect a candidate who's charismatic, but...."

CHARISMATIC, EASY-GOING, KNOWS how to connect with people. That's right—in their overwhelming hatred of Clinton the man, it seems Iowa Republicans have anointed a candidate whose primary appeal is his Clintonesque persona. Sure, Iowans will also tell you that they like Bush's "compassionate conservatism," his "focus on education," or his "family values," but his policy positions are clearly secondary to his charm and perceived empathy. Many supporters flail when asked to explain the candidate's issue positions and fall back on the oft-repeated catchphrases they've heard in his stump speech. ("He's conservative *and* he's compassionate," raves one Bushie.)

But, perhaps subconsciously embarrassed by the parallels between their hero and their nemesis, Iowa Bush fans endlessly emphasize one clear difference between George W. and William J.: breeding. In Davenport, Representative Jim Leach introduces Bush as "a man with a good father, a good mother, and an extraordinary wife." Two days later, at a Bush rally at Iowa State University, Senator Chuck Grassley asserts that "just knowing his dad oughta be enough to say you're for Governor Bush." Conducting a thoroughly unscientific survey, I find that one out of every three Iowa Bushies cites W.'s fine family as evidence of the candidate's fitness to lead. Iowans remember President Bush as a decent, upstanding, moral man. And they project that goodness onto George W. "Character," snapped one aged voter, explaining her support for George W. But it's Dad's character, not W.'s, that the name Bush brings to mind here.

Bush the elder, of course, had no charisma. This is one of the big reasons Clinton trounced him. In George W., Republicans have a candidate with Clintonian charm but on whom voters can project the decency and honor of Poppy. It remains to be seen whether W. can retain this amalgamated appeal—especially if rumors about his past crop up once again. But on this night in Cedar Rapids, as the candidate dives into the crowd for yet another meet-and-greet with voters, the magic seems to be holding. He smiles. He laughs. He kisses cheeks and slaps backs, just like the farmer next door. No wimpy handshakes here, folks.

CAUCUS NIGHT, JANUARY 24, 7 p.m. I am standing in the basement cafeteria of the Alden Community School in Hardin County, which I think may be, officially, the middle of nowhere. The town of Alden lies about 90 minutes north of Des Moines, smack-dab in the center of the state. With cornfields and hog farms all around, it is the kind of place from which people are frequently abducted by aliens. The town has some 900 residents—most of them on the "mature" side and either involved in or retired from agribusiness. When the wind is right, you can catch a whiff of hog waste in the air. I have come to Alden in search of a caucus unmarred by TV cameras and political staffers. By ten o'clock this morning, you couldn't swing a dead cat on the streets of Des Moines without hitting half a dozen reporters. But my guess is you wouldn't catch Peter Jennings dead in Alden. So now it's just me and 56 Iowa Republicans raring to fire the first shot of Election 2000.

My host for the evening is Loren Larson, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel and a dedicated Bush supporter. As caucus chair, Larson is in charge of keeping the meeting running smoothly, making sure nobody tries to grandstand or pick a fight. As people sign in, Larson preps me on what to expect. There will be a major Forbes contingent, he confides with obvious disappointment. "Forbes has made big inroads in this county." How exactly? Barbecue, says Larson. Last June, one of the local gentry hosted a cookout for Forbes that Larson estimates fed some 6,000 folks. Give an Iowan a free meal, says Larson, and he'll love you forever. "There are people around here who are professional funeralgoers because there's always free food afterward," he says in all seriousness. "It doesn't matter if they know who died or not."

One of the most important things to know about a presidential caucus is that very little time is spent actually discussing the presidential race. First, caucus officers and delegates to the county committees must be elected—an exercise that rapidly degenerates into something akin to freeze tag. People nominate one another to be spiteful. Those nominated then nominate someone else as payback. (You're it! No, you're it!) During the election for secretary, a little drama even develops. Lois Daum, a tiny, grandmotherly

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Strong stuff

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woman, is nominated and moves over to sit at the head table. But wait! Some troublemaker throws Stephanie Verkandt's name into the mix, and an open vote must be taken. The hands go up. The hands come down. The hands go up. Oh! It's Lois over Stephanie, 27 to 18. Justice prevails.

An eternity later, it's time for people to voice their presidential preferences. Under caucus rules—and Larson is a stickler for the rules—each person may take no more than two minutes to speak her piece. In larger precincts, the result is that only those who feel strongly about a candidate bother to sound off. But Larson isn't giving this group that option. Seat by seat, he goes around the cafeteria tables, pressing people to share their positions. Individually, the responses are unimpressive—often bordering on the unintelligible. Taken together, though, they prove revealing.

Larson is right: this is a Forbes crowd. One after another, people wax rhapsodic about the high-born publisher's business smarts, his financial independence ("He's the only guy who isn't bought off!"), his outspokenness on abortion, and, most especially, his vow to decrease their tax burden. But there are also more than a dozen Bushies in attendance, most of whom offer strikingly similar—and almost wholly substanceless—explanations for their choice. All told, eight people make a formal pitch for W. The first man to speak argues, "The father set a good pattern for the son." Four people vent their spleen over the Clinton era and assert that Bush is the Republican most likely to beat Gore. One man expresses disgust with Clinton and proclaims that Bush is "the most likable person out there," while a woman a little farther down the table praises Bush as a man of great "energy and spirit—and someone you like to see on television. Not that that's a big thing. But he has a good way of speaking. He can win it. And we need to have a winner in the White House." To sum up: He's got a winning personality. So much for the punditocracy's decision to dub this the "issue-oriented" election.

In the official Alden tally, Forbes comes out on top with 34 votes. Bush pulls 16, Bauer four, and Keyes two. It takes 15 minutes for someone to find a cell phone that works out here so Daum can report the results to the tallying center in Des Moines. The final 45 minutes are spent debating possible planks to recommend for the party's platform—the most controversial of which comes from an elderly gentleman who feels that the word "drug" should be excised from all written materials found in schools and other state-affiliated institutions. "Children see that word and become curious," he argues.

The party breaks up promptly at 9 p.m. Somehow, I survive the drive back to Des Moines and crawl into bed just before 2 a.m. The final caucus results have long since been announced, and, while W. didn't do so well in Alden, he did pull 41 percent of the statewide vote. A clip from his post-caucus celebratory speech is playing on C-SPAN. Natty in blue pinstripes and a red polka-dot power tie, the candidate speaks warmly of children and hope and national unity. He smiles his compassionate smile and nods graciously at the cheering crowd. The effect is positively presidential. Bill Clinton never looked better. ■

Bush is beating McCain. But it's costing him.

Capture the Flag

By JOHN B. JUDIS

MERRIMACK, NEW HAMPSHIRE

EACH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION is different, but this one is even more different. Voters are happy with the direction the country is heading in and with what the current administration has done. But—and here the strangeness seeps in—they seem willing to put a different party in the White House. The best precedent is 1960, when Democrat John F. Kennedy ran against Dwight Eisenhower's vice president, Richard Nixon. But that year the country was mired in its third recession in a decade. This year, voters are looking not for a change in course but for a change in the conduct of government and the character of its leader. They want government to continue on its current path, but under the leadership of someone not associated with either the Clinton administration or the Republican House.

The winning formula for the Republicans, then, is to nominate someone who has virtually the same economic program and social outlook as the Clinton administration's but is committed to political reform and stands out for his sterling character. The GOP has such a candidate: John McCain. Unfortunately for the Republicans, though, McCain will almost certainly not win the nomination.

Victory will likely go to Texas Governor George W. Bush, who looked during the first few months of his campaign as though he, too, had the right stuff for November 2000. The public saw him as the son of a distinguished, if not outstanding, president and as a man whose "compassionate conservatism" differentiated him from the House Republicans. But the Bush of those heady days is now a distant memory. During the past few months, in trying to meet McCain's challenge in New Hampshire and South Carolina, Bush has defined himself in ways that will hurt him come fall. And the Iowa results will only make things worse.

In New Hampshire, Bush has attacked McCain's support for campaign finance reform, warning that the McCain-

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Feingold bill "will hurt the Republican Party and hurt conservative causes." This charge resonates with GOP interest groups but not with the public. Most people don't know the details of McCain-Feingold, but they support the broader idea of political reform. When McCain promises to "get government out of the hands of special interests and moneyed people," he wins standing ovations. It's a little like the aftermath of Watergate, when Jimmy Carter wooed crowds by pledging to clean up Washington. By opposing political reform, Bush isn't just hurting his chances against McCain; he is robbing himself of a major theme he could use to tie Vice President Al Gore to what people don't like about President Clinton.

Bush also contrasts his much more lavish tax cuts with McCain's. In advocating $485 billion in tax cuts tilted toward the wealthy, Bush is banking on Republican precedents. In 1980, Ronald Reagan used the Kemp-Roth tax plan to defeat the elder George Bush in New Hampshire, and George Bush defeated Bob Dole there in 1988 by charging that he supported tax increases. In New Hampshire this January, Bush sounded the same themes. Like Reagan in 1980, he promised that his more generous cuts would not only enrich ordinary citizens but deprive Washington of funds it would squander.

BUT BOTH NEW HAMPSHIRE and the country have changed—and the allure of tax cuts is no longer as great. In prosperous times, voters yearn for a continuation of the fiscal status quo—meaning, in this case, government surpluses. In the 1996 election, Clinton convinced Americans that Dole's tax cut would threaten prosperity, and the Clinton administration used the same argument effectively against last year's congressional Republican tax-cut plan. Most voters, even most Republicans, are with McCain, Clinton, and the Democratic presidential candidates: they want the surplus primarily used to pay down the national debt and protect Social Security.

And Bush is not just out of sync with popular sentiment. He's out of sync with sound economics, and by the general election economists will be poking holes in his arguments. Bush claims America needs tax cuts to sustain its prosperity, but they could just as easily threaten it—by fueling inflation and widening the trade deficit. Bush says tax cuts will be "a fundamental debate in the general election." If they are, he'll lose.

Bush's recent campaign in New Hampshire has also drawn exactly the wrong distinctions between the governor and McCain. McCain's message is basically moral: He uses his stellar past as a war hero to enjoin Americans to look beyond their narrow self-interest. McCain's story and his summons to duty and country dovetail with his Perot-like crusade against special interests. By contrast, Bush's emphasis on tax cuts and the campaign finance status quo reinforces his image as a typical politician promising to reward campaign contributors and line voters' pockets. In effect, Bush has become precisely the kind of candidate he should be campaigning against in the fall.

Steve Forbes's strong showing in Iowa will force Bush even further from the center on taxes and abortion. Bush won't come in third in New Hampshire, as Forbes now predicts, but he could easily lose to McCain, particularly if Bill Bradley, who competes with the Arizona senator for independent voters, falters. If McCain wins New Hampshire, the nomination battle will move to the South Carolina primary on February 19, where Bush enjoys considerable political strength but may once again undermine his chances in the fall. South Carolina's Republican Party is one of the most retrograde in the nation. It is still peopled by the pro-segregation Democrats who switched parties along with Strom Thurmond in 1964. The hearts of South Carolina Republicans flutter at the sight of the Confederate flag flying above the statehouse in Columbia, and Republican candidates ignore this sentiment at their peril. In 1998, Republican Governor David Beasley was defeated for reelection partly because he angered GOP voters by courageously calling for the flag's removal.

The Christian right is also strong in the South Carolina GOP. It's represented by Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, the National Right to Life Committee, fundamentalist Bob Jones University, and numerous local activists working independently out of churches. In a day I spent following Bush around New Hampshire, I didn't hear the word "abortion" mentioned once, either by the candidate or by anyone in his audience. A few days later, at a McCain town-hall meeting in Greenville, South Carolina, where Bob Jones is located, I heard it more times than I could count. In exit polls taken during the 1996 Republican primary, 36 percent of voters identified themselves as members of the religious right.

To date, Bush has campaigned only sporadically in South Carolina, but in his few forays into the state he has already wounded himself for November, and there may be worse to come. Bush has said he views the Confederate-flag controversy as a "local issue," and his campaign has attacked McCain for calling the flag "offensive" and a "symbol of racism and slavery." (McCain, of course, has now joined Bush in refusing to take a position on the flag.) On January 11, the Bush campaign held an oyster roast and rally at Boone Hall, a former slave plantation near Charleston. Bush's willingness to snub African Americans probably won't matter in the primary, but it will hurt him in the general election. He got 27 percent of the black vote in his last gubernatorial election, but he won't get half that with the Confederate flag around his neck. And his implicit support for the South's segregationist past also diminishes his appeal as a moral alternative to the Clinton-Gore administration—especially among moderate Northerners.

IF BUSH IS forced to campaign in South Carolina, he will also be sorely tempted to placate the religious right. He won't be pressured by the Christian Coalition or National Right to Life, both of which oppose McCain because of his support for campaign finance reform. But he will get peppered with questions from reporters and local activists who want to impose an abortion litmus test on Supreme Court nominees. In Iowa, Bush succumbed to pressure from Forbes by declaring his support for the Republican Party's 1984 platform

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banning abortion without any exceptions. In South Carolina, he could face far more pressure.

How much pressure will depend on how close the race gets. In a January 10–January 13 poll conducted by Clemson University, Bush led McCain 51 to 29 percent. And Bush not only enjoys the support of the organized religious right but also has state political history on his side. In recent elections, the state's Republican voters have followed their leadership's example, decisively backing George Bush over Bob Dole in 1988, Bush over Buchanan in 1992, and Dole over Buchanan in 1996. This year, Thurmond and former Governor Carroll Campbell, the two pillars of the South Carolina GOP establishment, have thrown their support and organization behind George W. Bush.

BUT MCCAIN HAS strengths that could make the race much closer. For one, South Carolina's Republican leadership is no longer united, and the state's two most prominent Young Turks, Representatives Mark Sanford and Lindsey Graham, are campaigning actively for McCain. McCain also appeals to two important voting blocs in the state. There are 400,000 veterans in South Carolina, and the Clemson poll showed McCain ahead among Republican veterans almost two to one. If veterans and their spouses turn out in the Republican primary in their usual numbers, they will constitute as much as a third of the GOP electorate.

The other group, which overlaps somewhat with veterans, consists of "new economy" centrists and independents. In their outlook, they resemble Republicans in Merrimack or in Virginia's Fairfax County. These voters don't feel comfortable with the pro-Confederate old guard, the party leadership, or the religious right. They live in South Carolina's largest cities and suburbs and work as managers, engineers, and sales agents; many of them have migrated to the state from the North in the past two decades. They don't care whether the Confederate flag flies over the South Carolina statehouse. Some of them are pro-choice, but even those who aren't do not believe abortion should be an overriding political issue. Like the upwardly mobile everywhere, they want a candidate who rises above the muck of Washington politics.

Along with veterans, this group made up the bulk of McCain's audience at two meetings in Greenville and Greenwood on January 21. Several told me they had never been to a political meeting before; one woman said she was a Democrat. They described McCain as "honest, not cynical" and as a "bona fide hero." They expressed contempt for both Bush and Gore as typical politicians. And they voiced displeasure with the smattering of religious-right activists who dominated the Greenville question-and-answer session.

These voters could turn out in unexpectedly large numbers. In South Carolina, there is no official party registration, and anyone can vote in the Republican primary, which takes place three weeks before the Democratic one. In the 1996 Republican primary, for instance, 26 percent of the voters identified themselves as independents and five percent as Democrats. Jack Bass, a professor at the College of Charleston and coauthor of *The Transformation of Southern Politics*, thinks that if McCain wins New Hampshire and the national media and the candidates turn their attention to South Carolina, the excitement will bring centrists to the polls, swelling the primary ranks from the typical 250,000 to 400,000 and tilting the election toward McCain. "If McCain wins in New Hampshire, he will end up pulling it out of the bag in South Carolina," Bass predicts.

The press would love it. But, even if McCain wins New Hampshire and then South Carolina, Bush will probably still get the nomination. As usual, the media pays far too little attention to the delegate numbers. And they are daunting. If Bush, as expected, prevails in the winner-take-all primaries in his home state of Texas and in Florida (where his brother Jeb is governor) and wins twelve of 25 delegates in Iowa, seven of 17 in New Hampshire, and half in New York (where McCain is having trouble getting on the ballot), he will only need about 41 percent of the remaining delegates to get the nomination. McCain, who has raised one-fifth as much money as Bush and has virtually no organization outside of Arizona, South Carolina, and New Hampshire, can't overcome that advantage. But the longer the Republican contest lasts, the more Bush will suffer from the contrast between himself and McCain.

IF BUSH DOES wrap up the nomination in March, how can he repackage himself as a welcome antidote to the Clinton-Gore years? He would present a more compelling moral alternative if McCain joined him on the ticket as vice president. Bush may already be thinking along these lines. When asked about his choice of vice president, he says it is "presumptuous" to decide now. If a woman asks the question, he sometimes makes an oblique reference to Elizabeth Dole. But in Merrimack Bush appeared to slip when he said, unprompted, that "it would be insulting for [McCain] in the midst of this campaign to mention him in the context of the vice presidency."

Bush will have a difficult time, however, developing policies with which to challenge the Democratic nominee. It may be a promising year for a Republican presidential candidate, but it is not a promising moment for Republican economic and social programs. If Bush tries to get away from the specifics of his tax program, he will find little else to choose from in the Republican policy cupboard. There is scant public interest in or support for medical savings accounts, tort reform, or the evisceration of the Environmental Protection Agency. Bush's attacks on campaign finance reform and his refusal to accept public financing have eliminated any chance that he could position himself credibly as a political reformer.

Bush has to hope that Gore, the likely Democratic nominee, gets into a bidding war with Bradley for the support of Democratic interest groups and neglects what is most positive in his own political outlook. The good news for Bush is that Gore has at times done exactly that. The bad news is that he's likely to dispatch Bradley quickly enough that he won't have to do so much longer. In the primaries, Bush and Gore have both strayed from the centrism that voters appreciate about Clinton. Whoever can most plausibly move back will have the edge in November. ■

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New Hampshire learns to love government.

The Granite Shifts

By JONATHAN COHN

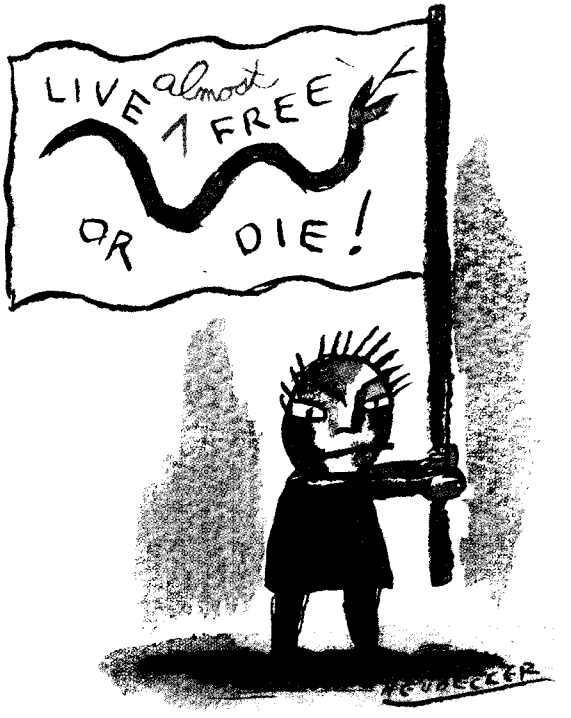
MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

ON THE MORNING of January 14, at the First Congregational Church on Hanover Street, 600 mourners paid their last respects to Nackey Loeb, publisher of the Manchester *Union Leader* until shortly before her death. Nackey had held the job since 1981, when she took over from her husband, William, who bought the paper in 1946. Together, over the course of more than half a century, they turned the 136-year-old daily into America's most vitriolic conservative newspaper—and, occasionally, one of its most powerful.

The reasons for the paper's power were clear enough. New Hampshire held the nation's first presidential primary, New Hampshire Republicans were rabidly anti-government, and *The Union Leader*'s endorsement was a sort of conservative *Good Housekeeping* seal of approval. In 1968, *The Union Leader* championed Richard Nixon, whom it saw as an underdog fighting the Eastern establishment, and it helped ward off a challenge by Michigan Governor George Romney. In 1980, the paper's merciless attacks on George Bush ("the candidate of David Rockefeller and the Trilateral Commission") were instrumental in catapulting Ronald Reagan to victory in New Hampshire. William Loeb invented the "no new taxes" pledge that became a rite of passage for Republican presidential hopefuls—and got President Bush into so much trouble when he ran for reelection in 1992. And, in 1996, the paper's endorsement helped legitimize Pat Buchanan, contributing to his startling upset of Bob Dole.

This year, however, things have been different. *The Union Leader* has aggressively agitated for another right-wing darling: Steve Forbes. But Forbes's poll numbers barely register in double digits, and his momentum from the Iowa caucuses will likely slow here. Meanwhile, the Republican alternative to the relatively moderate front-runner, George W. Bush, is the even more moderate John McCain, who doesn't appear to have suffered for the many barbs *The Union Leader* has lobbed his way. When Nackey Loeb died, only Forbes and Buchanan showed up at the memorial service to pledge fealty to the Loeb tradition.

There are lots of reasons for *The Union Leader*'s decline. Some say that the paper's influence stemmed mostly from William Loeb's uniquely aggressive approach to opinion journalism—and that once he faded from the scene, it was only a matter of time before his newspaper did, too. Others cite competition. Half a dozen other in-state papers and *The Boston Globe* now compete for space on New Hampshire's breakfast tables; plus, there's WMUR, the Manchester-based TV station that now has nearly twice as many viewers as *The Union Leader* has readers. But there's another reason for *The Union Leader*'s loss of influence, and it has nothing to do with changes in the New Hampshire media and everything to do with changes in New Hampshire politics. Although few people outside New England seem to realize it, a radical notion has started to take hold in the most famously libertarian state in the nation. New Hampshire's curmudgeonly voters are warming to the idea that bigger government may not only be necessary—it may even be worth paying for. This creeping realization has been transforming state politics for some time already, and this year, for the first time, it is starting to transform presidential politics as well.



NEW HAMPSHIRE'S HOSTILITY to central authority dates from colonial times. It was one of the first colonies to set up its own government, and New Hampshire patriots began skirmishing with the British in 1774, even before the shots at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. When independence came, New Hampshire drew up a state constitution that severely limited the governor's power. Among other things, it forced the governor to submit all appointments and key decisions to an executive

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council of officials elected directly by the voters, separately from the governor—and, thus, not beholden to him. Several other states originally enacted similar provisions but junked them because the executive councils kept state government from passing and running new programs. New Hampshire has kept its executive council—for precisely the same reason.

And it has worked as intended. Nestled between the liberal bastions of Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont, New Hampshire has become an island of "leave me alone" conservatism, with power concentrated in cities and towns that in many cases still govern by town meeting. New Hampshire is one of the stingiest states in the union when it comes to government spending, and it is the only one without either a statewide sales tax or an income tax. Of course, it's not as if New Hampshire's citizens don't pay taxes at all: there are "hidden" taxes—for instance, license fees—and property taxes. But the typical New Hampshire taxpayer's burden remains very light by national standards, and that light tax burden has been central to the state's success since World War II. In the 1970s, the very period when many other states were raising taxes to pay for new government services, New Hampshire's lack of broad-based taxes made it an attractive alternative, particularly for people from Massachusetts and New York. New Hampshire became the fastest-growing state in the Northeast, nearly doubling its population between 1965 and 1998. Not coincidentally, it also boasted one of America's fastest-growing economies, creating more jobs per citizen than any other state in the nation for a period in the late '80s.

The influx of refugees reinforced and even exacerbated the state's antipathy to taxes and to government in general, because nobody wanted to cut off the inflow of people and money—and because the newcomers themselves, almost by definition, resented paying high taxes. People began to speak of the "New Hampshire advantage," and in 1972 Republican Meldrim Thomson ran for governor on a pledge to preserve that advantage, promising never to raise "broad-based" taxes at the state level. With the vocal support of his close ally William Loeb—who made his views known via front-page editorials—Thomson won, routing the Republican moderates who had controlled the state GOP for years. Thomson went on to serve three two-year terms as governor, and Loeb went on to make the anti-tax pledge a centerpiece of his newspaper's election coverage. Almost without exception, those who refused to take the pledge lost. "As long as I can remember, going back to 1972, that was your ticket," says Jeff Woodburn, who served in the state legislature during the '80s and was chairman of the state Democratic Party. "If you wanted to be successful, the formula was, don't let anybody get between you and the extreme right."

THAT CONVENTIONAL WISDOM still holds. The idea that New Hampshire can't abide either taxes or the politicians who support them is as much a part of the state's lore as its famous town meetings. As recently as last week, an article in *Time* called the state "tax-allergic." But the perception is less and less accurate. And one of the reasons, ironically, is the massive influx of people during the last three decades. The very migrants who came to New Hampshire seeking refuge from taxes also brought certain expectations about what government would provide, expectations that require—you guessed it—more taxes.

In New Hampshire's southern tier, home to two-thirds of the state's residents, the massive population growth has transformed a collection of bucolic villages and mill towns into a chain of strip-mall suburbs. And, like suburbanites everywhere, the citizens of southern New Hampshire worry about their quality of life. In Nashua, whose population has doubled to more than 80,000 since 1960, a Republican alderman recently complained to *The Boston Globe* that "the growth is more of a negative on the city versus the positive. With all the new homes and the companies that have moved into the city, we have a lot more crime, a lot more traffic, and our roads aren't built to take the traffic." Along the "e-coast," the 18-mile coastal strip that houses New Hampshire's burgeoning high-tech industry, a business group recently released a report warning that sprawl could ruin the area's quality of life if the state doesn't better plan its growth.

As in most suburban areas, the topic of greatest concern has been schools. New Hampshire boosters note that their children are among the nation's highest-average scorers on the SAT. But that's misleading, as a widely cited report from the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies recently showed. Leave out the kids from prep schools like Phillips Exeter Academy, control for the state's higher-than-average per capita income, and New Hampshire's public schools are average, if that. Overcrowding and chronic textbook shortages plague cities like Derry, Merrimack, and Nashua, where the population growth has been most extreme. And there are other deficiencies, too: New Hampshire is the only state with no mandatory kindergarten. Not all the schools are bad, of course; go to an affluent college town like Hanover, home of Dartmouth College, and you'll see schools with state-of-the-art computer labs. But in old industrial towns like Claremont or Allenstown, you'll find schools without after-school activities or advanced-placement courses, to say nothing of computers.

The common feature of all these problems is lack of spending by the state—which, in turn, traces back to lack of money at the state's disposal. By 1996, only seven percent of the money spent on New Hampshire public education came from state government. That was, by far, the smallest percentage of all the states—the Illinois state government, whose contribution ranked forty-ninth, was spending nearly *four times* as much. As a result, the schools have relied almost exclusively on local government, which raises money through property taxes. This money is rarely sufficient, particularly for a state whose economy increasingly relies on high-tech industries that demand an ever more educated workforce. (New Hampshire has the highest proportion of high-tech workers in America, 84 per 1,000 residents.) "I think huge portions of New Hampshire's populace got fed up that schools couldn't afford what have come to be regarded as basic courses in twenty-first-century education—that is to say, a second language, advanced math, computer sciences,

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some sports, some art," says Peter Burling, Democratic leader of the New Hampshire House. "As New Hampshire had more and more people come in who were educated and born somewhere else, the level of expectations rose while the capacity of the tax base declined."

THE DISSATISFACTION WITH state services didn't immediately register at the ballot box. One reason is the economy. The recession of the early '90s hit New England harder than any other region in the country, and it had a particularly perverse effect on New Hampshire because of the tax system. While thousands were losing their jobs, the strain on government services kept draining public treasuries. So towns had to jack up property taxes—often on taxpayers who were already struggling—just to keep pace. In that environment, the idea of raising even more money to improve the schools, or any other government service, was a nonstarter.

Even after New Hampshire rebounded from the recession, the state's conservative power brokers kept new taxes at bay. In 1992, Democrat Deborah "Arnie" Arnesen ran for governor, proposing an income tax. Republican Stephen Merrill ran against her, took *The Union Leader*'s anti-tax pledge, and won. Eventually, though, a court case forced the issue. Years earlier, five New Hampshire cities had sued the state government over school funding, claiming the disparities in education violated the state's constitution, which obligated New Hampshire to provide every child with an "adequate" education. In 1997, after years of litigation, four justices, three of them appointed by pledge-taking Republican governors, sided with the cities. They ordered the state government to make school funding more equitable, which would mean coughing up $825 million per year.

The Union Leader railed against the decision, calling it "statist" and demanding a constitutional amendment to overturn it. Many Republicans joined the call, as did a few prominent Democrats. But the state legislature couldn't muster the votes to put such a measure on the ballot, so, with a court-imposed deadline looming, legislators began discussing the only alternative: raising the money through a statewide tax.

And then something remarkable happened: The voters didn't rebel. In 1998, several Democrats ran for the state legislature on a different sort of pledge—a pledge to raise taxes to better finance schools. Typical of these candidates was Clifton Below, who ran for the state Senate after sponsoring an income tax proposal in the House the year before. The heart of the Senate district was Lebanon, an old mill town now dominated by retail businesses and the Dartmouth Medical Center. The area hadn't elected a Democrat for more than 100 years, and its previous senator was Jim Rubens, a Republican *Union Leader* pledge-taker who left the Senate to run (unsuccessfully) for governor. Below called unabashedly for a four percent income tax, distributing flyers with the headline "LET'S TALK ABOUT TAXES." His opponent attacked him relentlessly for it, and *The Union Leader* joined in. But Below won by a bigger margin than Rubens ever had.

Emboldened by the presence of Below and other pro-tax upstarts, the state Senate last year did the unthinkable: It passed a bill to create an income tax. The House passed an income tax bill, too, and the measure died only because Democratic Governor Jeanne Shaheen threatened to veto it. In the end, the legislature and Shaheen compromised on a new property-tax scheme. But it has proven so unpopular (in part because it hasn't delivered enough relief to the working-class communities facing high property-tax bills) that many believe it's only a matter of time before the state finally turns to an income tax or sales tax. And some polls show that a majority of New Hampshire voters are willing to go along. "Once upon a time the very mention of a broad-based tax was anathema to the electorate," notes Clark Hubbard, who teaches political science at the University of New Hampshire and has studied the state's politics for years. "Now it is being discussed openly."

IF NEW HAMPSHIRE didn't hold the nation's first presidential primary, none of this would matter that much. But it does, and the state's political evolution helps explain why this year's Republican primary has taken such a surprising turn. Last fall, just about everyone assumed that George W. Bush's most serious challenge would come from the right; his advisers were said to be concerned that, if anything, his tax cut would not be perceived as large enough. But Bush, along with most other political prognosticators, misread New Hampshire. Steve Forbes, by far the most adamant tax cutter of the major GOP contenders, has struggled in the Granite State. Meanwhile, McCain may steal the primary by appealing largely to New Hampshire independents, who now outnumber registered Republicans. In his advertisements and speeches, McCain presents his modest tax cut as a prudent alternative to Bush's—one that plows most of the budget surplus into Social Security and Medicare—and that pitch has been winning him applause in town meetings across the state. Polls show that, even among Republican voters, tax cuts are not the most important issue.

In a subtle way, even *The Union Leader* is coming to grips with New Hampshire's new political realities. Last fall, the newspaper hired a new editorial page editor. Her conservative credentials are impeccable—she was a research assistant to Robert Novak and an occasional contributor to right-wing publications like *Policy Review*—but she's said to have a lighter touch and has so far avoided the epithet-hurling that made the newspaper so infamous. "That's not my style," she told the *Boston Phoenix*. This isn't to say that the newspaper William Loeb once edited is about to endorse higher taxes. But, if a paper as notorious as *The Union Leader* is no longer breathing fire, can the Republican presidential hopefuls be far behind? Looking back, commentators may see the 2000 GOP primary as the end of an era—just as 1988 marked the last race in which candidates invoked the Soviet threat. McCain's New Hampshire success has the potential to forever change the way candidates campaign in the Granite State. And, by the New Hampshire GOP primary of 2004, it's possible that massive presidential tax-cut plans and elaborate no-tax pledges will be a thing of the past. William and Nackey Loeb would not be pleased. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

A Passion in the Desert

JANE CAMPION'S CAREER takes on a shape. Before her latest film, she made four features. The two that were based on books were appealing. *Angel at My Table* treated Janet Frame's autobiography with compassion and vigor; *The Portrait of a Lady* gave Henry James some lively, if presumptuous, advice about the novel he ought to have written. But the two Campion films made from original scripts were disappointments. *Sweetie* was a distended effort to engage our empathy for an unbalanced young woman, and didn't. *The Piano* was a heavy load of pretentious symbolism. Now her fifth feature arrives, made from an original screenplay. The division continues.

Holy Smoke! (Miramax) was written by Campion and her older sister Anna, a former actress. Its subject is the attraction for Westerners of Asian religion, or at least Asian spirituality; its theme is the latent hunger for the unmaterial in a dominantly materialistic society. This is hardly a new film idea: *City of Joy* and *Beyond Rangoon* are only two recent examples. Still, the sisters Campion attempt a particular view of the struggle between the two cultures: they present it as a gladiatorial combat in the arena of sex.

The Campions, born in New Zealand and professionals in Australia, use an Australian young woman as protagonist. Ruth Barron, from a cookie-cutter Sydney suburb, travels to India with a girlfriend and comes under the spell of a guru in an ashram. The mark that he literally puts on her brow illuminates, she thinks, the path to goodness within. Ruth decides to remain in the ashram. The friend returns to Sydney and reports to her family.

Ruth's family is a demographic assembly: an "average" middle-class mother and father, a gay son, a married son with a hot-pants wife. They are all shocked by Ruth's decision, and Mum goes to India to bring Ruth home. As lure, she tells Ruth that Dad has had a stroke and is dying. While Mum is in India, she herself has a bad asthma attack. Ruth brings her home, only to learn that Dad's stroke was a lie—a typical falsity, she thinks, of this degraded world. She will go back to the ashram.

But the family has devised plans to keep Ruth at home. They have retained an American "cult exiter," P. J. Waters, who has succeeded one hundred and eight-nine times in persuading cultists to leave cults. Ruth of course resists the idea of Waters, but since he says he needs only three days, since the family surrounds her and pleads, she agrees to go off with Waters to a cottage in the outback for three days, quite confident that he will not affect her.

Those three days, which turn into four, are the core of the film. And are also its trouble. Partly this is because Ruth is played by Kate Winslet. She is so intense and heated, so breastily nubile, that her isolation for three days with this counselor—as all of us can foresee—is not going to be entirely clinical. (At one point she even says to him: "Do you like my personality or do you like my breasts best?") Further, Waters is played by Harvey Keitel, who, though middle-aged, is obviously meant to be Mr. Testosterone. These two characters, no matter what the therapeutic chat, are plainly bound for bed; so as we listen to the talk, we just wait for the inevitable action. (A contradictory cavil here. Keitel, who was in *The Piano* for Campion, doesn't have the ball-bearing power that the role needs. We soon imagine an actor of higher voltage in the part—say, Nicholson or De Niro. This would have made the long duet even more predictable but much more involving.)

The duet goes up and down the scale of likes, dislikes, flirtings, fights, longings, repulsions. After a day or so, Ruth invites sex, then is repelled the morning after. (Earlier, when Waters met her febrile sister-in-law to pick up supplies, he was also supplied with a personal sexual service—this to emphasize his potential with Ruth.) A lot of the Ruth-Waters dialogue, en route to the sack, is mock-psychoanalytic game playing. She: "What do you believe in?" He: "Why do you want to know?" To fill the film's need for variety, the screenplay takes the pair one night to an outback disco with her brothers and the sister-in-law. There Ruth does a suggestive lesbian dance and ends up being groped by two men in the parking lot—just to emphasize her incessant sexuality. Waters extricates her manfully and takes her home.

All this by-play wriggles toward the inevitable finish. In a faint reminder of Bergman's *Persona*, the patient becomes the healer, the healer becomes the patient. When Waters becomes absolutely desperate for Ruth, she tries to escape across the desert with books strapped to her feet. (Waters has hidden her shoes.) He pursues her, wearing the lipstick and red dress that she has put on him—in ridicule of his sexuality—and that he has accepted because by now he is her slave. As they stumble across the wide desert, he pleads with her to marry him, but she keeps going. He has to knock her out to stop her. At last, after several more twists, she pities the reduced and now-impotent man. At further last—"One Year Later," in fact—an exchange of postcards between India and America reveals that she has won but that he is restored.

Two details must be added. At one point in the desert duet, Ruth spells out HELP with white stones on the ground outside the cottage, for any passing plane and, rather blatantly, for any passing divinity. Second, Waters's female assistant, who has been delayed in America, arrives at the outback cottage on the third day, becomes jealous and agrees to wait only one more day for him to finish his job with Ruth. Quite apart from the structural clumsiness of her late appearance, that assistant is the worst piece of casting in the film—the stunning black actress Pam Grier, who brings sheer movie-ness into what is meant as Strindbergian rigor.

The setting naturally figures in the film: the desert vastness, a distant train sliding silently away, the full moon (twice), the scarlet sunset and sunrise. Campion even enlists dark clouds as background when Waters burns Ruth's sari. The fierce colors and the awesome space are meant to give a cosmic texture to the film, a sense of the blunt elements waiting below the plottiness. Nature does in fact help a bit; but there remains the film's neat predictability, from the patness of Ruth's previous environment (those stuffed animals in her Sydney bedroom, the family singing Malotte's musical version of the Lord's Prayer) to the dramaturgical lump of the duet in the desert.

The screenplay sometimes slashes with sharp dialogue, and Campion's directing unmistakably breathes conviction. What she lacks is sufficient humor to see when she approaches the risible and sufficient perception to keep her seriousness fresh. Her film-making, her stertorous doing of it, misleads her. Apparently she needs a

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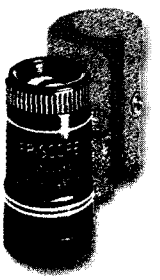

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previous work—a book, however she may alter it—as armature.

To which I quickly add that Campion has helped Kate Winslet to a complete performance. Winslet realizes every fiber, every fantasy, every enzyme, in Ruth's being. She is not only a gifted actress, she is daring. Yes, there was *Titanic*; but in *Sense and Sensibility*, in *Jude*, in *Hideous Kinky* (a role comparable to Ruth), even in her not quite successful Ophelia for Kenneth Branagh, she has shown an appetite for growth and the talent to support it.

Readers may remember that in September I commented at length on Godfrey Cheshire's two-part article (in the *New York Press*), "The Death of Film/The Decay of Cinema," an important discussion of new distribution methods and of digital film-making. In January, the Museum of Modern Art in New York held a symposium to discuss Cheshire's article, featuring Cheshire and five others from various film fields. The discussion was enlightening, and I was gratified to see that at least some of the speakers were worried about the effect that the new dispensation, however technologically fine, may have on the content of films.

Another concern occurred to me later. Until now, a number of people have been agitating for film preservation. The films that we already have we actually don't have—to a shocking degree. They disintegrate and otherwise disappear in incredible numbers. As the new millennium brings us the new technology, will this concern about these past films diminish? Will TV-cable distribution and the digital process not only alter the future but the past? ■

Martin Filler on Architecture

Shafts of Light

"IS THIS ENGLAND'S greatest architect?" asked the cover of a recent issue of *Country Life*, that bible of British tradition, next to a photograph of a marble bust of John Soane. Given the stiff competition—including Inigo Jones, Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor, Robert Adam, and Edwin Lutyens, among others—the question was a bold one. That it could be posed at all, and plausibly so, is an indication of how much John Soane's stock has risen in recent years. He is the perfect example of a long-dead, long-forgotten artist whose work again has much to say to present-day practitioners. The current Soane revival—heralded by a pair of exhibitions and three important books— is more than a matter of mere historical retrieval.

Soane's reputation languished in obscurity for more than a century after his death in 1837, but he had an immensely successful career. Reaching the pinnacle of his profession at the end of the Georgian Era, he won prestigious public commissions in the capital of the British Empire, and grew rich, and garnered high honors from his colleagues and his king. But despite Soane's tireless efforts to establish an architectural dynasty and to ensure a lasting place in history for himself, he descended into posthumous oblivion. His equally prolific rival John Nash—the Regency operator whose pasteboard-thin, white stucco façades were the three-dimensional equivalent of light classical music—became the period's most recognized British architect. Yet Soane could run rings around Nash, or any of his other contemporaries, in sheer inventiveness and fearless originality.

Soane's flair for self-promotion and his keen eye toward posterity were nicely exemplified by his transformation of his London row house into a private museum, which he bequeathed to the nation. The stupendous treasure chest at 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields is crammed literally to the rafters not only with the architect's drawings, papers, models, and books, but also with his huge assemblage of architectural fragments, archaeological treasures, important paintings (by Canaletto, Fuseli, Hogarth, Reynolds, Turner, and Watteau), plaster casts, historical oddities, and bizarre trifles. It remains Soane's most revealing work, an autobiographical testament, a shrine that has long mesmerized architects and laymen alike.

As architectural fashion shifted, Soane found a more receptive audience among literary figures. Visiting the house-museum eleven years after its creator's death, Emerson appreciated it as a veritable microcosm of the country, essential to understanding the architect's homeland: "Yes, to see England well needs a hundred years; for, what they told me was the merit of Sir John Soane's Museum, in London,—that it was well packed and well saved—is the merit of England;—it is stuffed full, in all corners and crevices." Four decades later, Henry James set a scene of his novella *A London Life* amid Soane's eerily atmospheric collection, which the young American Laura Wing calls "one of the most curious things in London and one of the least known."

It has always been difficult to place Soane precisely within the architectural canon. (This was one of the reasons for his eclipse.) Though he was educated in the classical tradition, and measured the ancient monuments *in situ*, and was capable of designing in the most archaeologically accurate manner, he was no slave to history. As his long career progressed, he took increasing liberties with the classical vocabulary, and so he came to be reviled by purists. Unlike post-Renaissance Italy, where *invenzione* was the most highly prized talent among artists and architects, in Georgian England correctness was the ideal. The anonymous author of a scathing anti-Soane lampoon called *The Modern Goth* skewered the architect's "fine disordered Order," typified by "pilasters scor'd like loins of pork."

Even some of Soane's most forward-thinking contemporaries were made uneasy by the anti-rational streak that was as pronounced in his work as his pragmatism and his forthrightness. Soane's greatest European counterpart, the Prussian architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (who was not afraid of tweaking the classical tradition himself), visited his colleague's house-museum in 1826. Though impressed by Soane's collection, Schinkel was less enthusiastic about the structure's spatial playfulness and tectonic trompe l'oeil, writing in his travel journal: "*Überall kleine Attrappen*," "Everywhere little deceptions."

Much of what Soane did has for some time seemed presciently proto-modern: his tendency to abstraction; his preference for minimally ornamented surfaces whose decoration was incised rather than applied; his happy reliance on utilitarian materials left frankly undisguised; and his easy improvisational responses to changing functional requirements as a project progressed. Yet he was never part of the early modernists' carefully created prehistory, which favored the even more stripped-down geometries of Soane's revolutionary French contemporaries Éti-

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enne-Louis Boullée and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, as well as the engineering structures that began to change the face of Britain during Soane's middle age.

IT WAS NOT until the second half of the twentieth century that Soane's very personal blend of the past and the present, of the prosaic and the poetic, struck such a resonant chord with a generation looking for a way out of the strictures of modernist orthodoxy. In 1950, a momentous London lecture on Soane by John Summerson, and his monograph two years later, opened the eyes of the postwar generation to the architect's peculiar powers of physical illusion and emotional suggestion. This was far headier stuff than the cool, technocratic rationalism of mainstream modernism, and a thrilling eye-opener in austerity-straitened England.

Suddenly, Soane was being looked at by young architects who saw him not as a relic but as a maverick. They were emboldened by his audacious handling of interior space, his confident upending of received ideas, and his healthy disregard for classical platitudes. Soane's work seemed traditional but was in fact subversive, and its example suggested how contemporary architects might begin to chip away at the academic colossus of their own time: the later corporate phase of the International Style.

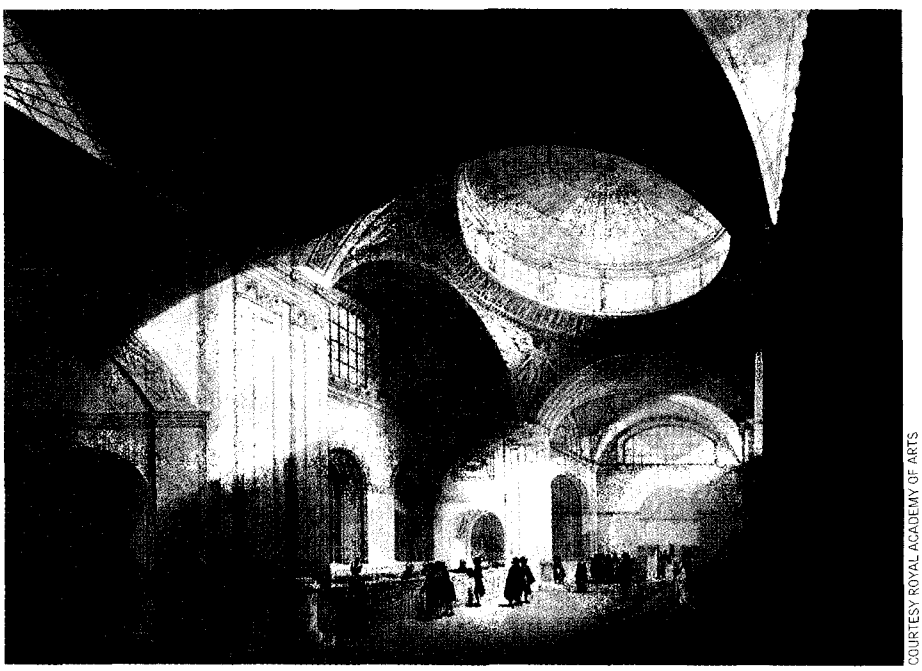
Philip Johnson, that reliable barometer, was among the first to apply Soanean motifs in his own work in the wake of Summerson's eloquent advocacy. Johnson mimicked Soane's seamless, curving elisions between walls and ceiling in the canopied bedroom that he designed for his own guest house of 1953 in New Canaan, Connecticut (the pendant to the earlier and more famous Glass House, a few feet away). For the sanctuary of the Kneses Tifereth Israel Synagogue of 1955-56 in Port Chester, New York, he again employed a signature Soanean ceiling treatment, though that diagrammatic transposition of Soane's pendentive (or "handkerchief") vaults brings to mind the flimsy scenographic effects of Nash more than Soane's gutsy volumetrics. And in the 1980s Johnson returned yet again to Soane, appropriating the Englishman's cross-vaulted "starfish" ceiling for the living room of his own apartment in New York's Museum Tower.

The wider rediscovery of history by younger practitioners in the 1960s brought Soane even further to the fore. In 1966, Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, that resounding first shot in the war against modernism's historical amnesia, included illustrations of the Soane house-museum's breakfast parlor and dining room. And in that same year Charles Moore, another proponent of learning from the past, and no mean experimenter with interior space himself, remodeled his own Greek Revival house in New Haven with Soanean abandon. Gutting the small, two-story wooden structure, Moore inserted three floor-to-roof sheet-rock towers, which he punctured with superscale geometric cut-outs. One of the shafts plunged into the basement, just as Soane had done at 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields. Moore's vertical elements set up a monumental order in diametric opposition to the miniature scale of his profuse collections of small objects, and the intimate spaces that he sheltered within niches and canopies, again like Soane. Still, Moore was well aware that the master could not be outdone, and later he wrote of Soane's breakfast room:

> The complex subdivisions overhead, made magic by the mirrors, along with the illusion of depth in the tiny pictures, contribute to this room, seeming at once minuscule and cosmic. Soane's poignant exaltation of the almost trivial is peerless, beyond any hope of emulation.

Though Soane is cited in none of the major studies on Louis Kahn (who taught Moore, Venturi, and Denise Scott Brown), there are pronounced affinities between them as well, as Robin Middleton suggests in his excellent essay in *John Soane, Architect: Master of Space and Light*. Both Soane and Kahn were thoroughly trained in the classical tradition, and were inspired by the same Roman sources on their Grand Tours to ancient sites, especially Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. Both architects tended to design buildings that were far more dramatic on the interior, with exteriors that rarely hint at the glories within. The inward-turning nature of Soane's Bank of England of 1788-1833 in London was a programmatic requirement, but it prefigured a similar orientation that recurred in Kahn's later work. Kahn was as accomplished an exponent of natural top-lighting as Soane was. And a certain quirky awkwardness in both men's buildings saves them from the deadly polish of the self-assured stylist and bespeaks the personal eccentricities of truly remarkable individualists.

Soane was a pioneer in museum design,



COURTESY ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

John Soane, View of the Consols Transfer Office, Bank of England, drawn by Joseph Michael Gandy, 1799

and the nineteenth-century building that most present-day architects scrutinize for its lessons is his Dulwich Picture Gallery of 1811-13 in London. Built to house a collection of Old Master paintings left to Dulwich College, the gallery is now highly regarded for its felicitous balance of perfectly proportioned rooms (an enfilade of alternating cubes and double cubes) and luminous natural light. Constrained by a very tight budget, Soane was forced to forego almost all decorative flourishes. Though he was always content to work with brick, his favorite building material, the gallery's exterior is exceedingly plain even by his standards, and it is only somewhat more ornamented than his stables of 1814-17 for the Royal Hospital at Chelsea in London. This accounts for what many have seen as Dulwich's "modern" aspect, though such a severely stripped-down aesthetic was not the architect's preference.

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During the museum boom of recent decades, many architects have tried to replicate the gentle wash of light that cascades from the canted ceiling coffers and onto the pictures at Dulwich. Kahn came closest with the skylighted barrel vaults at his Kimbell Art Museum of 1966-72 in Fort Worth. But no modern museum can depend on natural light alone, and even in the most successful adaptation of the Dulwich prototype—Venturi and Scott Brown's Sainsbury Wing of 1985-91 at the National Gallery in London—artificial illumination is dominant.

The captivating aura Soane established at Dulwich is not merely the result of technical know-how. The architect was a close friend of artists (especially Turner, with whom he shared a passion for fishing as well as painting), a discriminating collector, and the creator of his own museum. For all these reasons, he was miles ahead of his contemporaries in the conception and the development of that new form of building.

NOW SOANE SEEMS poised for wider recognition, at last. An illuminating retrospective, *John Soane, Architect: Master of Space and Light*, was held at The Royal Academy of Arts in London in the fall. It was a notable success, strikingly designed by the British architect Piers Gough, whose mounting included several reduced-scale mock-ups of Soane's schemes. Such recreations are a risky business: they can help the general public to better understand the nontransportable medium of architecture, but if they are poorly carried out they demean it to the level of a cheap stage-set. In this case, the capacious Victorian proportions of the Royal Academy's Burlington House galleries generously accommodated Gough's simulacra, which were executed with a much lighter and defter touch than his customary postmodern pastiches. The reconstructions at the Royal Academy included a 70 percent version of Soane's Colonial Office of 1818 at the Bank of England. This was supplemented by an excellent computer-generated walkthrough of the complex bank building in its entirety, projected on one wall beneath the recreated Soane dome and above a large model of the structure. This was one of the most helpful and one of the the least intrusive uses of electronic media in an architecture exhibition in recent memory. (The one flaw throughout the exhibition was the poorly designed and positioned wall-labels, which were all but illegible in the dim light necessitated by the many works on paper that were displayed.)

Although there is a kind of unending retrospective available at Sir John Soane's Museum—the holdings of which formed the overwhelming majority of the 200-plus pieces in the Royal Academy show—the recent survey was extremely valuable, for several reasons. Most of the drawings and the watercolors of Soane's projects are not on regular display at their permanent home. The architectural models and renderings exhibited there are arranged in anything but the orderly thematic groupings of the recent exhibition. That helpful categorization by project offered the rare opportunity to get a comprehensive sense of Soane's major schemes through his original documentation.

Yet that tidy organization did not take the juice out of the material. Soane had innate theatrical impulses that led him to display things more for drama than for reason, and much of that panache was preserved at the Royal Academy. Especially effective was the glorious pile-up of eighteenth-century cork models of classical ruins, recalling Soane's Grand Tour of 1778-80 and its profound impact on his architectural development. Those architectural souvenirs were nicely agreeably with newly executed models of the architect's early work, which he designed when the direct example of antiquity was still fresh in his mind.

IT WAS HARD to take one's eyes off the richly colored, seductively light-filled watercolors of Soane's projects by his favorite renderer and foremost interpreter, Joseph Michael Gandy, an unsuccessful architect but a genius of the art of architectural presentation. Soane was not a natural draftsman and he had the good sense to recognize it. Instead he kept Gandy, a soulmate who understood his intentions to the core, busily employed for decades. And when Soane ceased to build, he still had Gandy produce retrospective tableaux. Even the least stirring of Soane's buildings—his neat little bow-front brick country houses—attain irresistible glamour beneath Gandy's threatening blue-gray skies or bathed in the orange glow of reflected sunsets. His hypnotic images of Soane's individual structures, built and unbuilt, as well as his fantasy assemblages of them mixed together in dizzying tiers, make one wonder what Soane's standing would be if he had not enjoyed the extraordinary services of his visual amanuensis and spiritual alter ego.

Brooder that he was, Soane sometimes commissioned Gandy to paint views of his buildings as ruins, a conceit of the Romantic era that tapped into fashionable archaeological attitudes. In this architect's case, however, such depictions turned out to be more predictive than he would have wished, for almost all of his public buildings have been destroyed. His additions to the Houses of Parliament at Westminster, a job that he coveted more than any other, were torn down within a few years of his death to make way for Charles Barry's and A.W.N. Pugin's Victorian neo-Gothic ensemble. The Chelsea Infirmary in London was bombed to smithereens during World War II. (The Dulwich Picture Gallery, south of the city center and less badly hit, could be restored). Worst of all, his masterpiece, the Bank of England, was pulled down in the 1920s to make way for Herbert Baker's singularly uninspired enlargement.

FOR FORTY-FIVE YEARS Soane served as surveyor, or official architect, of the Bank of England, a lucrative sinecure that placed him at the epicenter of what his new biographer Gillian Darley calls, in one of her many evocative turns of phrase, "an impressive political spider's web" of power and patronage. Though Soane always regretted not winning more of the big royal and governmental commissions for which he yearned, Darley makes it abundantly clear that the Bank of England was by far the most important British institution of his time. It was, inarguably, the making of him. By the end of Soane's tenure, he had transformed the bank's rhomboidal site, a three-acre island in the heart of the city, bounded by streets on all four sides, into an intricate composition of nine interior courts on a scale reminiscent of an Imperial Roman palace.

The architect began with a brief to make the bank impregnable both to civil unrest and foreign attack. Riots earlier in the eighteenth century, and the threat of invasion during the protracted Napoleonic Wars, prompted him to design a building made almost entirely of nonflammable materials and surrounded by defensive stone walls some 30 feet high. The bank was virtually without windows; natural illumination was provided by the skylights at which he excelled. The project proceeded episodically, with new components added as the nature of banking changed with the times. There was never a master plan, because new requirements were constantly emerging. Halls in which one kind of financial business were transacted—annuities, stocks, checks, and the like—were added in sequence. Soane, who worked in the same fits-and-starts manner in the expansion of his own house-museum, was brilliant at fitting new bits into the ever-expanding jigsaw puzzle.

Miraculously, the cumulative impression at the labyrinthine Bank of England was that of the most logical unfolding of space. Confined transitional passages led again and again to huge, lofty domed chambers—the Bank Stock Office, the

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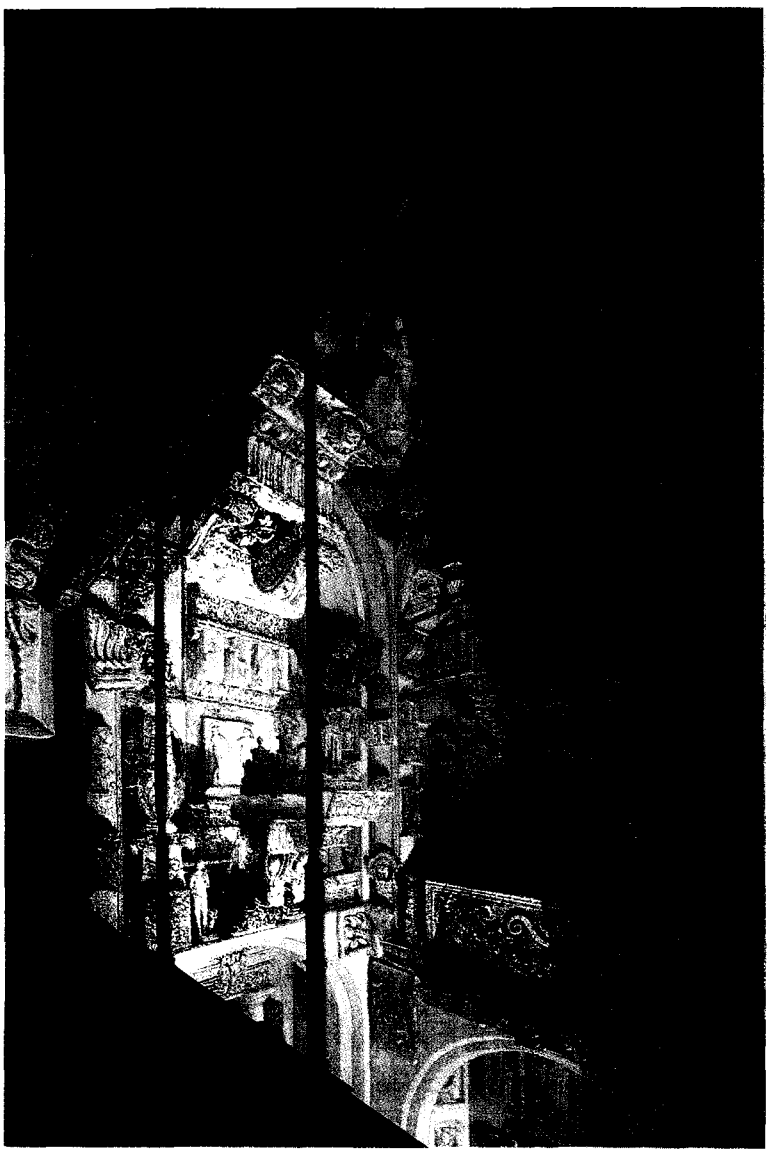
Colonial Office, the Consols Dividend Office, the Old Dividend Office, and the Rotunda—that were each a variation on the same noble theme of dome and skylight. Mundane though some of the activities carried on by the bank may have been, the architect was alive to the symbolism and the significance of the place. As Darley writes:

> ...the Bullion Yard was marked by a huge triumphal arch, inspired by the Arch of Constantine, complete with allegorical ornament. The loading and unloading of gold, the fuel in the Napoleonic Wars, would take place in a proud and resonant imperial setting; Soane's sense of classical history, his theatrical instinct and above all his adherence to the correct application, and associations, of the architectural orders rose to the occasion.

The destruction of Soane's Bank of England was an act of civic vandalism even more egregious than the razing of New York's Pennsylvania Station four decades later. Frank Yerbury's haunting chiaroscuro photographs, taken before and during the demolition, record the magnitude of the crime. (Those images are reproduced in the Royal Academy's stunningly illustrated exhibition catalog, edited by Margaret Richardson and Mary Anne Stevens, and published handsomely by Yale University Press.) Only Soane's subtle peripheral wall, three-quarters of which was retained, survives as a tantalizing vestige and a damning reproach.

The British architectural historian Gillian Darley's definitive new biography, *John Soane: An Accidental Romantic* (Yale), is not only the finest life-and-works of an architect to appear in many years, it is also a character study of the utmost understanding. Darley's panoramic approach places Soane in his times with a cultural authority and a wealth of erudition rarely encountered in architectural writing today. By setting her sights so widely, she gives an exhilarating overview of the architect and the forces with which he had to contend. And in probing so deeply, she offers new insights into the close correspondence between her paradoxical subject's cranky personality and his perfervid creative imagination.

Born in 1753 to a country bricklayer, John Soan (he added the "e" to seem less common) remained insecure and evasive about his lowly origins all his life. Yet it was from his craftsman father that he learned everything that there was to know about brick, and his use of that humble but infinitely versatile material was virtuosic. The boy's talent was spotted quickly, he was well educated, and then he was apprenticed, through a fortuitous family connection, to the up-and-coming London architect George Dance the younger. From an early age, Darley writes, Soane was "exceptionally alert to the processes of patronage," and he lost no time in using his new connections to advance himself.



John Soane, View of the Dome, 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, drawn by Joseph Michael Gandy, 1811

Enrolling—thanks to Dance—as a student at the Royal Academy, Soane won the institution's Gold Medal in 1776, and a year later he was awarded its traveling scholarship for the Grand Tour, a trip deemed essential to architects aspiring to the highest rank. Until he died, Soane celebrated the date of his departure for Italy as the greatest day of his life, and the two-year peregrination was an artistic revelation. Just as importantly, he traveled with a group of six well-connected young men, five of whom went on to become his clients. While on the tour he also fell in with the family of William Pitt the younger, the prime minister, and the nexus of still more patronage throughout Pitt's twenty-year premiership, the longest in British history. Soane also became a Mason, another rich source of networking, and was admitted to a lodge headed by the Duke of Sussex, the brother of two kings.

Being Soane's friend, or even worse, being his relative, could be a trying affair. Amazingly, though he was even more self-absorbed, competitive, and sensitive to criticism than is usual in his profession, he somehow managed to win and to keep the devotion of a large circle of colleagues, many of whom he fell out with at one time or another. One friend noted the accepting consensus that Soane's "*fancies* [were] constitutional, therefore not to be helped." But Soane was characteristically astute in his choice of a wife. At twenty-nine he married Elizabeth Smith, the niece and ward of a prosperous London builder, whose death, six years later, made the Soanes rich in their own right. Unfailingly supportive and heroically forbearing, Eliza Soane was the bedrock upon which her mercurial, not to say unstable, mate could anchor himself.

Alas, their two surviving sons were quite another story. At a time when most young men followed their fathers' trades or professions, Soane nurtured high hopes of founding not just an architectural dynasty like the Dances, but nothing less

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than what he called "a race of artists." But the hapless, feckless Soane boys, John and George, were spectacularly ill-suited to the task of succeeding their demonically ambitious father. Though Darley wisely steers wide of the shoals of psychobiography, she makes it plain enough that Soane was far from an ideal father. He was so singlemindedly intent on his work that there could not have been much time left over for his children, and such as there was he spent trying to control every detail of their lives. Given his deep-seated competitiveness, it is easy to suspect that this demanding father set his offspring up only to have them fall short of his towering measure.

In any event, neither son had any real aptitude for, or interest in, architecture. The consumptive and passive John (who died before his father, when he was 37) went along with the charade for a while to placate his controlling parent; but George enraged Soane by declaring his intention to pursue a career in writing and, worse yet, the theater. Though Goethe praised some of George's translations of *Faust*, the younger Soane son was a dreadful dramatist. His play *The Dwarf of Naples* was but one of several stinkbombs that he landed on the London stage. George found his true talent in sponging off and emotionally blackmailing his parents, until they refused to bail him out and he was imprisoned for debt and fraud. Then he began to publish vicious and anonymous attacks against his father.

Although Soane was prone to paranoid fantasies when things did not go his way, he was nonetheless right to suspect George as the author of these screeds. They were far too well-informed and detailed to have been written by anyone else. In 1815, a pair of long and especially vituperative articles became the last straw. The ailing Eliza Soane avowed that George "has given me my death blow," and two months later, no doubt in part from the stress of the episode, she died. Soane, vindictive and a world-class cultivator of grudges, was unwilling to forgive an innocent slight, let alone a humiliating public attack that killed his wife. He cut George off forever and hung a framed copy of the fatal text—which he called "The Death Blows"—in his drawing room, to the great embarrassment of his friends. Yet so strong was Soane's will to perpetuate himself that he still harbored fantasies of an architectural lineage. He paid for his grandsons' educations in the hope that they would follow in his footsteps. As could be expected from this desperately dysfunctional dynasty, the third generation came to ruin, too.

Much of this sordid family history lay buried for years. Soane sealed incriminating papers in a series of time capsules that could be opened only after long intervals, and successive curators of Sir John Soane's Museum were loath to see the sad story exhumed—which did not occur until 1984, when Dorothy Stroud's biography appeared. Darley lays out a full account of George Soane's misdeeds—which included fathering an illegitimate son with his wife's sister, with whom he lived in a sometimes violent *ménage à trois*—but she does so with a tact that lifts it above historical scandal-mongering.

Contentment could never come to a personality as restless as Soane's, but the decade before his death at 83 was filled with many honors and satisfactions. He was knighted, a distinction that eluded George IV's shifty royal favorite Nash. He received the gold medal of his profession. He wrote a guidebook to his collection, and saw parliament accept his museum on behalf of the nation (though not before George Soane tried to block the legislation, claiming he was being robbed of his inheritance.)

THE CATALOG OF the Royal Academy show comprises twenty-three essays by leading Soane scholars, and the quality ranges from the informative to the revelatory. This handsomely produced volume also provides the most complete visual treasury of the architect's projects in print. Its generous format and its sympathetic layout, designed by Esterson Lackersteen, make this a rare publication that actually transmits a palpable sense of architectural space and light, so integral to Soane's work in particular.

Among the contributors to the catalog is the architectural historian David Watkin, who this spring is bringing out *Sir John Soane: The Royal Academy Lectures* (Cambridge), a new edition of the architect's theoretical writings. Always eager for the confirmation of officialdom, Soane maneuvered unscrupulously to become professor of architecture at the Royal Academy, pushing his mentor Dance out of the position and precipitating a break that would last for seven years. Soane labored mightily to make his talks (which he gave from 1810 to 1820) accessible to the general public. He produced large watercolor renderings of his designs to illustrate his points, an enormous effort in the days before slide projectors. Though now primarily of interest to specialists, these talks are a crucial part of the historical record. It is good to have them available again, along with Watkin's cogent essay on the architect's attitudes toward history and theory, and reproductions of his lecture illustrations.

The Royal Academy show depended so heavily on loans from Sir John Soane's Museum (the only other Soane holdings of any significance are at the Victoria & Albert Museum) that one expected to see the house denuded during the run of the big survey. That the interiors seemed in no way diminished is a tribute to Soane's manic acquisitiveness. But *Inspired by Soane: MacCormac, Meier, Moneo, Navarro*, the much smaller pendant exhibition now at the Soane museum, is a tremendous disappointment. This well-meaning but poorly considered assemblage of the allegedly Soanean propensities of the British architect Richard MacCormac, the American Richard Meier, and the Spaniards Rafael Moneo and Juan Navarro Baldeweg, brings together photographs, drawings, and models of their recent work, as well as more persuasively Soanean designs by several earlier twentieth-century architects.

UNBELIEVABLY, Moore, Venturi, and Scott Brown, who have applied Soane's lessons in their built work with more consistency and more imagination than any other contemporary architects, have been excluded from this dubious round-up. It says something when the show's most convincing example of the modern influence of the master is Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's once-ubiquitous red-painted wooden K2 telephone booth of 1924 (now being replaced throughout Britain by a cheesy metal-and-glass abstraction of that iconic design). Scott, who became a trustee of the Soane museum in 1925, clearly based his scheme on the tomb that Soane designed for his wife, and where the master himself was also interred. Talk about a long distance call.

How could the organizers of *Inspired by Soane* have found any meaningful correspondence between Soane and MacCormac's fortress-like Ruskin Library of the 1990s at Lancaster University, which has much more to do with the dense cylindrical forms of the contemporary Swiss architect Mario Botta? And the decision to include a model of Meier's J. Paul Getty Museum of 1984-97 in Los Angeles, but not Venturi and Scott Brown's Sainsbury Wing, is a scandal. The Sainsbury's lucidly top-lighted galleries and majestically arch-framed enfilades invoke Dulwich far more directly and fully than Meier's schematic paraphrase. (Fortunately, the Sainsbury Wing is illustrated in the Royal Academy catalog.) And where is Moore, the influential architect, teacher, and writer who did more to advance Soane's reputation among the present generation of practitioners than anyone else?

This unworthy show notwithstanding, nowhere is the link between the man and the work clearer than at his breathtaking

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residence-cum-gallery, which he worked on in several campaigns between 1792 and 1834. Soane called its jam-packed interiors "studies for my own mind," and indeed their chock-a-block overabundance is the better analogue to his fertile but obsessive imagination, and his ferocious ambition, and his prodigious energy. "To a mind naturally active," he once wrote, "no torture is like the pain of idleness," and at 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields we see physical evidence of a mind that was never able to turn itself off.

The projecting Portland stone façade of the Soane house, adorned with Coade stone caryatids and medieval corbels that Soane cannily salvaged from his deplorable demolitions at Westminster Hall, is notably grander than those of its brick neighbors in a typical Georgian residential terrace, facing a large garden square. He owned the houses on both sides as well, and annexed the rear portions of those properties to create a T-shaped plan formed by the narrow confines of the central structure and the flanking back yards of the adjoining two. With that unusual configuration in place, Soane was able to suggest infinities of space through a series of dazzling sleights of hand.

A century before Frank Lloyd Wright demonstrated how modern architects could "break out of the box," Soane achieved a comparable dissolution of orthogonal interior space, though in ways quite different from those of the later master. Whereas Wright always wanted his buildings to seem anchored to the ground, Soane imparted a sense of upward thrust and structural weightlessness wherever he could. He took pleasure in making his interiors seem ready to float away, as buoyant as a Montgolfier balloon. Shallow pendentive domes (which blurred the line between ceiling and wall) and a multiplicity of arches further undercut the relentless rectangularity of architectural convention.

Moreover, Soane's fascination with the vertical is the opposite of Wright's insistent emphasis on the horizontal. Cutting light-flooded shafts into the heart of his house-museum, Soane conjured a mysterious sense of cosmic space that is the antithesis of Wright's dark, cave-like enclosures. To create the Dome (as Soane called the central display space of the house-museum), he sliced through the ground floor to create a soaring shaft that he surmounted with a skylight, the more dramatically to show off the ancient sculpture and architectural fragments that he assembled there.

Lighting is where Soane really shone. No architect has ever used natural overhead illumination with greater impact than he did, deploying skylights of all shapes and sizes to admit the sun deep into the windowless centers of his buildings. His own city house would be a claustrophobic maze without them. And even in his country houses, with open views from every elevation, a skylight can bring focus and emphasis to a central staircase or drawing room. He often used stained glass in his skylights, specifying a yellow tint to infuse a space with extra warmth, or other colors for more exotic moods. It proved especially enlivening beneath the overcast skies of Britain, and it may have been the architect's intuitive response to his own deep need for daylight: he was prone to severe and regular depressions during the dark winter months and may well have suffered from what is now called "seasonal affective disorder."

Mirrors were another trick that Soane used to diffuse light throughout his interiors in the days before reliable artificial illumination. Though mirrors were widely employed for that purpose as they became more accessible with the mass-production of glass, he did not hang looking glasses on the wall like framed pictures. Instead, Soane integrated mirrors into the architecture of his rooms, or he used them as decorative elements in a modern update of the classical cartouche or beaded moldings.

Soane was particularly intrigued by convex mirrors; their round form was geometrically elemental and their curving surface created entrancing optical illusions. He affixed more than a hundred mirrors in the breakfast room of 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields: four large convex ones in the corners of the pendentive dome and scores of smaller ones to encircle the oculus and to outline the arches beneath it. Strips of mirror glass were also fastened to the soffits of skylights to intensify natural illumination, and the backs of niches were similarly lined to bounce light back across a room. (In a Pop homage to Soane, Moore used round bicycle mirrors to achieve similar effects in his interiors of the 1960s and 1970s.)

What Gillian Darley calls "the tenuous balance between light and dark in his temperament" found its parallel in the exciting extremes that Soane was able to work into a single structure. Just as his professional life rose to the highest of heights, his private life plumbed the deepest of depths. That tension between sunshine and shadow, as central to his architecture as to his personality, casts him now in a high relief that surpasses the flat profiles of his more fastidious contemporaries. Darley concludes her superlative book by praising Soane's "fiercely held faith in the place of imagination and poetry in architecture," and this is precisely what makes him speak to us so clearly across the centuries. ■

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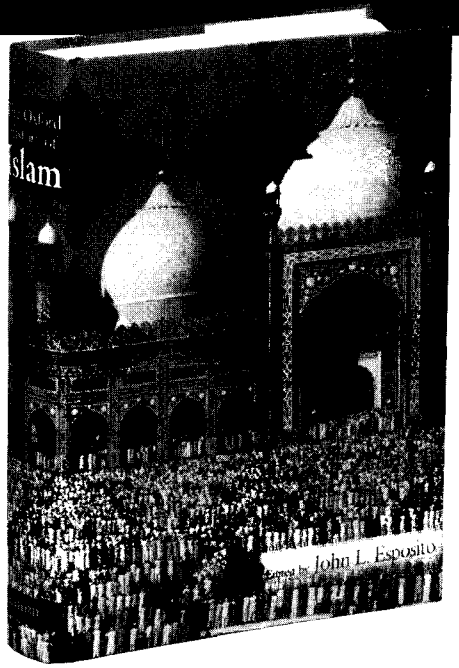

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Professor Whatever

By SIMON BLACKBURN

Kant and the Platypus: Essays on Language and Cognition by Umberto Eco translated by Alastair McEwan

(Harcourt Brace and Company, 464 pp., $28)

I.

THE TITLE OF Umberto Eco's new book gives due advertisement of his trademarks: high themes, arcane learning, strange corners of philosophy and history and natural history, large intellectual vistas, a sense of play. Readers excited by these prospects will probably already be familiar with *The Name of the Rose* or *Foucault's Pendulum*. They should be warned that the intellectual temperature is here supposed to be much higher. In *Kant and the Platypus*, Eco reverts to his academic interest in semiotics, or the theory of signs and communication.

His new book makes no concessions. It takes the reader into difficult writers, such as Heidegger, Kant and Peirce, and into their worst parts. Eco has been reported as saying that "This a hard-core book. It's not a page-turner. You have to stay on every page for two weeks with your pencil. In other words, don't buy it if you are not Einstein." Such braggadocio—call it Eco-terrorism—certainly fits the book, which is clearly the work of a person in whom the sense of doubt is less developed than other ambitions, such as cutting an intellectual figure, or appearing as something of a priest or a magus.

Eco's book resists classification, like the platypus of the title. It is not a work of philosophy, or scholarship, or cognitive science, though it bears resemblances to works in those fields. Unlike, say, *Alice in Wonderland*, it is not an entertainment, though it is entertaining in some places, and in many places it tries to be so. Like the platypus, it comes across as a bit of this and a bit of that. Its character is captured by the publisher's disclaimer: "Forgoing a formal, systematic treatment, Eco engages in a series of explorations...." But this is a little disingenuous: it gives the impression that a formal systematic treatment of something is just around the corner, extant even, but that Eco modestly hesitates to give it to us.

In truth, however, it is hard to imagine what has been forgone. Eco is not a man who concentrates on one thing at a time, which is presumably a precondition of formal and systematic thought. He is a polymath who likes to impress and to sidetrack his readers; and the topics tumble over one another and compete for attention. I nearly said that we are watching the flight of the butterfly, not the stoop of the hawk; but both those creatures fly in the clear air, whereas here we are in the swamps, and much of the time we are close to suffocation. After some passages you might manage a wry smile, but generally speaking Eco's warning not to buy the book is sound, whether or not you are Einstein.

It is fair to start with the more positive side. This is the book of a very clever man who has read enormously. The individual chapters or essays give the impression of contributing to the discussion of serious philosophical problems. And when Eco allows us to come up for air, we often find ourselves pretty much on the side of the angels. He has noticed, for example, that it is not true that anything goes. There is a real world that, even if it admits of different descriptions or interpretations, nevertheless offers "lines of resistance" to false or inadequate thinking. If there is a boulder in your path and you fail to perceive it, things go worse; and they go worse in ways painfully apt to show what is wrong with the idea that there is nothing beyond the text. You know reality when you come up against it. Language, as Eco puts it, does not create being *ex nihilo*.

It is sad that all this still needs to be said, and it is well worth remembering that even the idealist Berkeley said it. Still, given that there are precincts of the academy in which truth and reality are endangered species, it is good to find a large-scale intellectual such as Eco getting this right. Incidentally, Eco's notion of resistance pleasantly echoes the motto—*Les choses sont contre nous*, "things are against us"—of the "resistentialist" school of philosophers invented by the humorist Paul Jennings. In Jennings's droll account, the French derived this by remorseless logic ('From this it follows, or it does in the French...'), whereas the empirical English established it by dropping pieces of buttered toast on carpets, and finding that the toast fell buttered side down with a frequency in direct proportion to the value of the carpet. Eco thinks, more portentously, that resistance is a manifestation of Being—or, as one might say less gravely, it is just one of those things.

Eco can also be good about the constraints on interpretation—as one might again expect, given that *Foucault's Pendulum* was a long allegory on the idiocy of unconstrained frenzies of taking one thing as a sign of another. The problem with that book was that the skepticism was muted. It required of us a lot of devotion to numerology, the Kabbalah, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the Knights of the Rosy Cross, and the rest of the menagerie before we were permitted to dismiss them, and even then the permission was curiously half-hearted. In his new book, Eco is more forthright, perhaps abjuring a wilder youth.

Indeed, the most philosophically interesting part of the book is Eco's defense of the rocks of genuine fixed meaning that stay put among the seas of reinterpretation. He reports a debate with Richard Rorty, who had alluded to the right that we have to interpret a screwdriver as something useful for scratching our ears, and Eco's reply is surely exemplary:

> A screwdriver can serve also to open a parcel (given that it is an instrument with a cutting point, easy to use in order to exert force on something resistant); but it is inadvisable to use it for rummaging about in your ear precisely because it is sharp and too long to allow the hand to control the action required for such a delicate operation; and so it would be better to use not a screwdriver but a light stick with a wad of cotton at its tip.

It may be hard to believe that Rorty has really got himself into a state in which it would seem strange that a plumber carries tools different from those of a doctor. Perhaps he has. Perhaps pragmatism has come to this. In any event, as J.L. Austin once remarked, there is always the bit where you say it and the bit where you take it back.

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Eco is also deft on truth in fiction, as in this passage:

> It has been said that narrative worlds are always *little worlds*, because they do not constitute a maximal and complete state of things... In this sense narrative worlds are *parasitical*, because, if the alternative properties are not specified, we take for granted the properties that hold good in the real world. In *Moby Dick* it is not expressly stated that all the sailors aboard the *Pequod* have two legs, but the reader ought to take it as implicit, given that the sailors are human beings. On the other hand the account takes care to inform us that Ahab had only one leg, but, as far as I remember, it does not say which, leaving us free to use our imagination, because such a specification has no bearing on the story.

Another instance of Eco's dexterity introduces a reservation. Consider the hoary old problem, Why do mirrors reverse left to right and not up to down? Eco talks of mirrors at length, and he gives a short but very confident solution to the problem. (This is itself unusual, since in general Eco cherishes mysteries rather than the solutions of them.) Eco claims that mirrors do not reverse anything at all. He invites us to think not of a mirror but of a "prosthetic eye," a third eye that is situated in our index finger. If we point this at ourselves we will obtain the view that somebody has who is facing us, which, Eco seems to think, is equally the view that the mirror gives us. It is this point of view that "reverses" left to right, but this just means that it is facing in the opposite direction to our normal point of view. In a footnote Eco tweaks the psychologist Richard Gregory:

> Gregory also quotes Gardner ... who had also made the obvious observation that mirrors do not reverse anything at all. But not even this is enough for Gregory, and he adds another reason for surprise: that mirrors also reverse depth, and that is to say, if we walk away from a mirror, say toward the north, the image moves away from us toward the south, and it gets smaller (I would add that it's hardly likely to come running straight at us). But, Gregory says, mirrors do not reverse concave and convex. All you have to do is think of the mirror as a prosthesis, or an eye on the index finger, and it will let me see what I would see if someone were standing in front of me: if that someone moves away, his image gets smaller, but if he has a potbelly, then it will stay that way, nor will the pit of his stomach contract toward the inside.

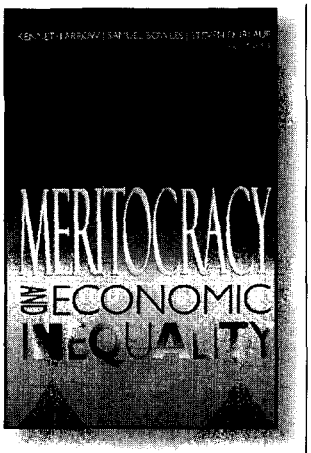
Again, this is amusing. The playfulness works well. The problem is that a moment's thought shows that if this is Eco's theory, it is incorrect. The view in a mirror is *not* the view obtained by looking at someone standing in front of you, nor is it the view obtained by an eye looking at you. To see this, hold an ordinary book on your chest and look in a mirror. You will have difficulty reading the writing. But to a person looking at you, the writing reads normally; and if you now ask your partner to hold the book outwards and face you, you have no difficulty reading it either. Mirror-writing does not appear in either of these views. (I say "if this is Eco's theory," because here, and everywhere, he shows a gift for evasion, and it is extremely hard to know with any certainty what he actually believes.)

The passages that I have given are pleasantly humorous. But as Bernard Williams observed a few years ago, Eco's real wit is juxtaposed with things that seem unfunny to a bewildering degree. In the new book, we could contrast the passages that I have just quoted with a long and labored exercise in which Eco draws a "map"—in fact, two maps—of an imaginary town called Vanville. The streets and the landmarks of this town are labeled with names and terms that are found as examples in the writings of the philosopher Quine. The only intellectual point of the exercise, which stretches over ten pages, is to show that it is difficult to locate things by referring to landmarks once the landmarks have vanished. The ulterior motive seems to be to display a cozy intimacy with Quine's writing, and indeed with Quine personally. "'Van,'" he instructs, "is how Willard Van Orman Quine was known to close friends." I do not know whether the claim to intimacy is justified, but the thing is excruciating either way. And why the past tense, since Quine is still among us?

II.

BEFORE WE GET to Kant or the platypus, *Kant and The Platypus* begins with a chapter on Being. Here is a fairly typical sample:

> As Heidegger says in *Being and Time* (¶490), angst constitutes the opening of being-there to its existence as being thrown for its own end; agreed, and the (grammatical) subject of this thrown being is the *Dasein*. But then why is it said immediately afterward that "because of it [angst], being opens to being-there" and the "being of being-there is totally at stake"? The being of being-there is pure tautology. Being-there cannot be based



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> on something, given that it is "thrown" (why? *because it is*). Whence comes this *das Sein* that opens itself to being-there, if the being-there that opens itself is an entity among the entities?

Whence, indeed. It would be wrong to ridicule this before explanation, for philosophers must be allowed their bits of terminology. It is much better to ridicule it afterwards.

So: to say that something opens to being-there means that people think about it. We all know about *Angst*: the fear of death and absurdity and all that. Something is said to be thrown at us if we cannot do anything about it, although admittedly this does not explain why our existence is thrown "for its own end," whatever that may mean. If we want to know what Being is, we will have plenty to look back upon. "Here is what we mean by the word *Being*: Something." On the other hand, "Being is the horizon, or the amniotic fluid, in which our thought naturally moves." I don't know if I live an unusually cluttered life, but I find it difficult to reconcile these two statements. Something bumped into my car last week, but I don't believe it was either a horizon or an amniotic fluid.

All right, we are not supposed to take it literally; but then we must ask ourselves how we are to take it. Anyhow, "Being is even before it is talked about." Being also pops up in Latin: "Being is *id quod primum intellectus concipit quasi notissimum*." We have also been told the answer to the question, "Why is there being rather than nothing?" The answer, adverted to above, is: "*Because there is*." Yet this answer, which Eco insists must be taken "with the maximum seriousness," is in danger of being retired two pages later, when we are equally told that "there is no need to wonder why there is being; it is a luminous evidence."

All this may help the reader to understand the passage that I have cited, or it may not. P.G. Wodehouse talks of family occasions best avoided, when Aunt is calling to Aunt like mastodons bellowing across primeval swamps; and Eco's sparring with Heidegger reminds me of them. In fact, insofar as we can keep score here, it seems to go like this. Heidegger holds that it is only because people are afraid of death that they become self-conscious, or perhaps conscious of the world around them. This is analogous to the Stoics' view that it is only because people are afraid of death that they seek political office and want to have statues erected to themselves. These are not very convincing ideas, but if this is Heidegger's stumbling at a thought, then Eco's reply that consciousness is "thrown," or even "pure tautology," is clearly off-target. Consciousness and self-consciousness are worth explaining, and an emotion such as the fear of death might be a part of the explanation, unlikely though it sounds.

What has gone wrong? Meditation upon Being has its roots in Parmenides, Plato, Plotinus, Anselm, and Aquinas. It need not be disreputable. What is disreputable is the way these meditations become hijacked by oracular obscurity. Eco collaborates in this obscurity with Heidegger, who at least had the excuse of being a theologian by training. It might seem merely tiresome when intellectuals trick out banal thoughts—nature turns up people who think; sometimes they worry; they think about death; the modern world is horrid—in terms of Being, Being-there, Being revealing itself, *Angst*, and the rest. But in fact it matters a great deal, as the famous double dactyl reminds us:

> Higgledy piggledy
> Herr Rektor Heidegger
> Said to his students:
> "To Being be true!
>
> Lest you should fall into
> Inauthenticity.
> This I believe—
> And the Führer does too!"

Umberto Eco by Vint Lawrence for The New Republic

Lament that you have lost the shelter of Being, and soon you start wanting a plan for recovering it. This turns out to require authenticity, which is best discovered through nineteenth-century Romantic visions of inarticulate ancient purity, the Fatherland, blood, and destiny. You then find that the quest requires a political expression, such as the Nazi Party, whose unique rapport with primordial Being was so striking to Heidegger. The sleep of reason produces monsters, and more monsters.

Or as Voltaire said, those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities. The good news is that Eco is not dangerous, certainly not dangerous enough to produce monsters; and his interest is not really in ontology or cosmology. The bouts with Heidegger come across as mere certificates of profundity. His real interest is in the nature of signs and cognition.

III.

If there is a central theme in Eco's book, it is the problem of universals, or of the relation between particular things and general categories. Eco introduces this topic by means of cases where we come across things that stretch previous classifications. When Marco Polo arrived in Java, he came across the rhinoceros, and he was able to regard it only as a rather scrubby unicorn. When Spanish cavalry arrived in the New World, Mon-

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tezuma's subjects did not know what they were seeing, or even whether they were looking at one animal or two.

Kant never came across the platypus, unless possibly by hearsay towards the very end of his life. But Eco is exercised by the question of how Kant might have reacted to a beast that resisted familiar biological categories. I am not sure why this is an interesting question. Like anybody else, Kant would have been faced with the problem of warping his scientific heritage to fit his new experience. It is not clear that the critical philosophy gives him any special understanding of this process, or any reason to conduct it in some special way. In fact, as Eco admits, the question is speculative, for Kant does not tell us much about small-scale, everyday empirical concepts, such as "dog" or "chair" (or "platypus"). He is happier with highly abstract concepts, such as substance and time, or space and causation, and even a platypus is a thing that lasts for a time, occupies space, resists penetration, and is subject to gravity.

Still, Eco wishes to link Kant to the platypus. So he directs us to the chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in which Kant seems to address the way in which concepts become applicable in experience. Even here it is not really clear that Kant intends to be talking about everyday empirical concepts. Kant's chapter is called "The Schematism of the Pure Concepts of Understanding," which certainly suggests otherwise, since the pure concepts of understanding are the big abstract categories. In any case, the chapter was a notorious show-stopper even in Kant's time. Jacobi called it "the most wonderful and most mysterious of all unfathomable mysteries and wonders." Many modern commentators have dismissed it out of hand. Their view is that Kant had set himself an unanswerable question, along the lines of "What is the rule for applying rules to experience?" or "What is the recipe for making use of recipes?" The complaint is that there cannot be a rule for applying rules in general. Any answer would be regressive, having to consist in producing another rule or another recipe, about which the same question would then inevitably be asked.

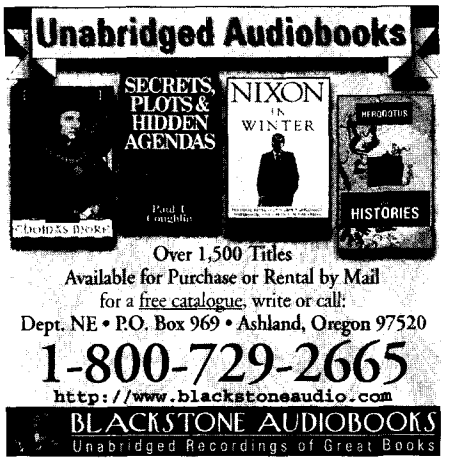
This moral is often credited to Wittgenstein, who is indeed adept at uncovering hidden regresses in various accounts of our understanding. We are apt to feel, for example, that spontaneous judgments might be explained by our having, in our mind's eye, diagrams or templates or little pictures that tell us what we are looking at. So if I am told to pick a red flower, perhaps I do so by conjuring up my red picture and then picking a flower that bears a sufficient resemblance to the picture. Wittgenstein's comment on this in *The Blue Book* is lethal—one of the best short refutations in philosophy:

> But this is not the only way of searching and it isn't the usual way. We go, look about us, walk up to a flower and pick it, without comparing it to anything. To see that the process of obeying the order can be of this kind, consider the order "*imagine* a red patch." You are not tempted in this case to think that before obeying you must have imagined a red patch to serve you as a pattern for the red patch which you were ordered to imagine.

Wittgenstein points out that there has to be a stop to producing interpretations of words (or diagrams or images). There has to be a point at which we just go ahead and do what we were told, without consulting any mental diagrams or templates or words at all.

Yet this is also a point that Kant himself makes, immediately before the notorious chapter on schematism. So charity seems to require that we find something for Kant to be doing other than committing the mistakes against which he has just warned us. The best suggestion, I believe, takes seriously his own warning that he is talking about "an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze." That art is the art of judgment, and the reason that it is concealed in the depths of the soul is precisely that it cannot be reduced to the grasp of rules, or recipes, or criteria. Nor can it be reduced to the presence, before the mind, of a thing like a picture or a even a word, and for Wittgenstein's reason. Even when pictures, diagrams, and words float before our mind's eye, judgment only comes about when we have taken them the right way. Judgment then requires something spontaneous, outside the domain of reason; but this "something" is a pre-condition for making any application of reason.

This can all sound very mysterious. We are not comfortable with arts concealed in the depths of the soul. But what we are facing is bedrock, the unthinking deployment of customs and routines that make up the way in which we are usually at home in the world. When it comes to recognizing things, we just do it. Common sense and philosophical reflection really cannot tell us any more. There can be a further science of the functions of the brain that enable us to just do it, and of course there exist remarkable data on what happens when those functions are damaged; but Eco is explicit that he intends to offer no contribution to any such science.



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What, then, is Eco doing? He talks at length of the particular and the general, and of the nature of symbolization, but it is never clear that he has grasped Wittgenstein's point or Kant's point. He reverts constantly to the idea of us applying a diagram, or an icon, or a schema, as if this were the essential but mysterious element in explaining the process of judgment. Perhaps semiotics is an open invitation to this idea. Semiotics is the study of what occurs when one thing is a sign of another thing. To suppose that it is fundamental to cognition, then, is to suppose that cognition is essentially a matter of comparing one thing with another; but this is precisely the model that Wittgenstein and Kant oppose.

IV.

IT IS HARD to tell what is going on here, and it is equally hard to tell whether Eco is addressing mysteries or manufacturing them. Still, this is not always the case. Perhaps unwisely, Eco does engage, confidently and combatively, with relatively clear themes of modern philosophy. And here a more definite verdict is possible.

Prominent literary intellectuals often like to make familiar reference to the technical terminology of mathematical logic or the philosophy of language. A friend of mine overheard the following conversation in Cambridge during *l'affaire Derrida*, when the proposal to grant an honorary degree to that gentleman met serious opposition. A journalist covering the fracas asked a Prominent Literary Intellectual what he took to be Derrida's importance. "Well," the PLI confided graciously, unblushingly, "Gödel showed that every theory is inconsistent unless it is supported from outside. Derrida showed that there is no outside."

Now, there are at least three remarkable things about this. First, the thing that Gödel was supposed to show could not possibly be shown, since there are many demonstrably consistent theories. Second, Gödel indeed did not show it, and he did not purport to do so. Third, it makes no sense to say that an inconsistent theory could become consistent by being "supported from outside," whatever that might mean. (Inconsistency sticks; you cannot get rid of it by addition, only by subtraction.) So what Derrida is said to have done is just as impossible as what Gödel was said to have done.

These mistakes should fail you in an undergraduate course on logic or mathematics or philosophy. In the world of the PLI, however, they are minor considerations. In his world, the mere mention of Gödel, like the common invocation of "hierarchies" and "metalanguages," gives a specious impression of something thrillingly deep and thrillingly mathematical and thrillingly scientific. And it gives the PLI a flattering image of being something of a hand at these difficult but deep things, an impresario of the thrills. I expect that the journalist swooned.

ECO IS NOT in the same league as my PLI. He has taken the trouble to read a good deal of the modern philosophy of language. He talks familiarly of Quine, Putnam, Davidson, and Kripke. Perhaps the Anglo-American tradition should be grateful for this, since few figures in continental Europe take this trouble. He also remarks intelligently upon real problems for some positions in the Anglo-American tradition, notably the problems of fictional and empty names. And yet Eco has a disturbing tendency to go right off the rails. I apologize in advance for needing a little bit of detail to show this, but it is Eco who has strewn the technicalities in the path of his audience.

A good example is Eco's use of the notion of "rigid designation." This is a technical term due to Saul Kripke. It describes a feature belonging to names and indexical expressions ("this," "I," "here") in natural languages, and it distinguishes them from other referring expressions, notably descriptions ("the first dog born at sea," "Kant's hometown"). In a nutshell, the "rigidity" in question means that when you use a name, even to talk about strange and different possibilities, you are still interpreted as talking about whatever it is to which the name actually refers. So if I say, "Had the political boundaries been slightly different, the people of Königsberg might have spoken Latvian," I am still talking about that very town, Königsberg. But if I say, "Had his parents moved south, Kant's hometown might have been Berlin," the description "Kant's hometown" has become detached, as it were, from Königsberg. For I am not trying to say that had Kant's parents moved south, Königsberg might have been Berlin. I am saying that Berlin is where he might have been born and raised. This is what is meant by saying that descriptions are not rigid, whereas names are rigid.

Eco talks a great deal about rigid designation. Unfortunately, he identifies it by the ambiguous formula that a rigid designator refers to the same thing "in all possible worlds," and then takes that formula in the wrong sense, as meaning that there is no possibility of the same name referring to something different. This is a misunderstanding against which Kripke explicitly and clearly warned. Given this misinterpretation, of course, the idea of rigid designation would be outrageous, since you can always take a term and use it to refer to something different. People like to give their pets names such as "Aristotle" or "Toscanini." It is particularly bizarre of Eco to think that Kripke and the tradition following him failed to notice that the indexical "this" may refer to different things on different occasions. It would be as if having said, pointing to one flower, "This is a rose," you could not go on to say, pointing to another flower, "But this is a daffodil."

The blunder leads Eco to suppose that rigid designation is "independent of all knowledge or intention or belief on the speaker's part." It leads him to some strained speculations about the reference of terms being fixed by the Divine Mind or the Infinite Mind, as if it were God who forges the link between names and things. It also leads him to misunderstand another celebrated episode in modern philosophy of language. The philosopher Hilary Putnam once proposed a "twin-earth" thought experiment, in which we imagine an earth just like this one, except that the stuff playing the role of water is some different chemical, called XYZ. We can imagine, according to Putnam, the persons on twin-earth talking happily of "water." Eco interprets Putnam as proposing that persons on twin-earth would thereby be referring to water, or H_2O, because he takes rigidity to imply this. But Putnam's point was exactly the opposite, namely, that they would not be referring to water, but would be referring to the stuff that surrounds them, to XYZ, which is not water but a good substitute for it. Eco not only gets this wrong, he even implies that Putnam is somehow inconsistent, having forgotten his own earlier opposition to the idea that reference is fixed somehow by magic, by something outside of us like a Divine Mind.

ON ANOTHER OCCASION Eco squares up to one of the most famous papers in modern philosophy, Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," which appeared in 1951. In that paper, Quine attacked the entire positivist program as dependent on two carefully described dogmas. Later, in 1973, in an almost equally famous paper called "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," Donald Davidson claimed that even a sanitized empiricism, free from Quine's two dogmas, depended on yet a third dogma. Eco presents himself as knowing all this. "I am well aware," he writes, "that advocating the existence of observation sentences independent of a general system of propositions was said by Davidson to be the third dogma of empiricism..."

The problem is that it wasn't. That was Quine's second dogma of empiricism, the

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one that he called reductionism, and to which his counter was that "our statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience not individually but only as a corporate body." Davidson's third dogma of empiricism was that there is a defensible dualism of "scheme and content"—a distinction between the world waiting to be organized, and the conceptual scheme that does the organizing. And, like Kripke, Davidson explicitly insisted on the distinction in the course of introducing his third dogma.

Anyone can make a slip, but I suspect that Eco could not bring himself to face Davidson's third dogma fairly and squarely, because he is heavily invested in it himself. He is constantly speculating on how the mind uses categories, schemata, cognitive types, language, and inference in order to organize and to impose order on an undifferentiated "continuum." Or perhaps semiotics encourages an ability to misread. There certainly are other examples: I would have liked to add an account of Eco's nightmarish attempt to engage with the Polish logician Alfred Tarski, but that is not suitable for family enjoyment.

VI.

DOES ALL THIS matter? To anyone who knows anything about Kripke, Putnam, Quine, or Davidson, these things seem like the thirteenth strike of the clock, the one that casts doubt on all the rest. But Eco brushes the details aside, and his intended audience is unlikely to be any the wiser. In the wider scheme of things, some might think that it doesn't really matter if here and there a PLI goes astray. If all you want to do when you have the stick is twirl it around in the carnival, then it is not important whether you get hold of the wrong end of it.

Whatever else it may be, Eco's playfulness is certainly a good defensive posture. It makes it hard for the critic to take a stand, and harder still for the audience to admit that any shortcoming may be involved in its admiration of the work. You cannot effectively criticize the *Alice* books on the grounds that they make no sense, for this is a part of their charm. In Eco's case, however, the lapses of sense are not a part of the charm. His words are presented as if they are to be taken seriously, as a contribution to a little bit of science, a modest chamber in the storehouse of valuable human thought. And they may be so taken by many, including their author.

The problem here is not the hip, glib, parodic style of a postmodernism that has fundamentally nothing to say. But it has similar roots. In a famous review in the philosophical journal *Mind* in 1961, P. B. Medawar talked of the bogus misuse of biology and evolutionary theory in Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man*, and asked how it could ever have gained an audience. He perceptively identified the state of mind that is required for its admiration as, "Really it's beyond my poor brain, but doesn't that just *show* how profound and important it must be?" This is an intellectual version of passive-aggressive syndromes in psychology—an attitude very much like taking pride in one's own abasement. The novice is to trust the master all the more because the master humiliates him; and his trust in the master numbers him with the elect.

I draw the comparison with the novitiate because until we make it, we might be merely irritated by some of the more overt discourtesies of Eco's book. He provides no translations of other languages, and Latin especially is strewn around liberally. His book is marketed as a book for the general reader, not as a specialist monograph. Yet it presumes that the reader is acquainted with things such as Peirce's philosophical terminology—something that almost nobody understands. It also presumes an acquaintance with difficult and technical logic, and with the philosophy of language. Eco also makes an unappetizing number of references to his own previous works and skirmishes with fellow semioticians. Very, very few readers will not be insidiously humiliated.

And we can now see that this humiliation is deliberate, like the hazing routines in a fraternity. The audience for a book such as this one must want to enjoy its own bewilderment. At the same time, however, the audience is not supposed to think of this as playtime. It is not like the proper audience of the *Alice* books, which might enjoy its own confusion, just because it enjoys testing the boundaries of

Square d'Orléans

A place where suffering and rapture
mingled once—two substances
that have long been acquainted.
A bank now occupies this space;
dapper gentlemen enter and exit,
each one slender as a new banknote.

Chopin lived here once. His fingers
struck the keyboard, matter, in a rage.
Impassioned poetry once lived here.
Peace and quiet now prevail, while nearby
insurance agents flourish, and the doctor
sees his patients at appointed hours.

Dusk falls; apartment houses stand
like worried herons on the century's waste
(the distant whistle of the city sounds).
In the center of the square a little fountain
shyly raises up two braids of water
reminding us of what life really is.

We sit on the steps as nothing happens.
It's also impossible to say
that we feel anything like sorrow.
Anxiety and rage (two
younger nations) have given way
to classical restraint.

The September evening slowly darkens,
a gentle wind traverses Paris
like an elderly Kabuki actor
playing the ingenue's role.
If anything upsets us—but nothing
does—it's only emptiness.

Adam Zagajewski

—translated by Clare Cavanagh

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ordinary logic and ordinary courses of events. The proper audience for Carroll has to be perceptive, in a way that the proper audience of Eco (or Teilhard) must be blind. This cannot be an audience educated into thinking. It must take active pleasure in the sleep of reason, and take comfort in the presence of mysteries.

It is important to realize that the fault has almost nothing to do with an affinity for one school of philosophy rather than another. After all, Eco is marvelously eclectic. Nor does it have anything to do with the alleged right of the intellectual to imitate the scientist, by adopting technical terms and difficult vocabularies. The mental suffocation that I have described is not usually due to difficult vocabularies. Yet Eco can leave you for pages distressed or infuriated because you do not know if he has got hold of a real problem, or what he is really trying to say about it. The fault, I believe, is a kind of literary-philosophical conceit, an obscurantist knowingness, a complacency that blurs the difference between genuine mastery of a technique and the self-deceived appearance of it.

When I finished reading Eco's book, I had a recurring image of the Roadrunner cartoons, in which Wile E. Coyote is forever finding himself running off the edge of the cliff. He stays up so long as he keeps running, so long as he does not look down. Umberto Eco never looks down. And if he refuses to notice the cliff, perhaps he is right to think that his audience will also not notice it. In this, like the platypus, he has adapted himself perfectly to a particular environment—in this case, an intellectual environment. But what he has produced should make us deeply worried about that environment, which is much bigger and more ubiquitous even than he is. ■

The Inflaming Image

By G.W. Bowersock

The Portrait of the Lover by Maurizio Bettini translated by Laura Gibbs

(University of California Press, 352 pp., $45)

In Euripides' *Alcestis*, a play about a woman who generously undertook to die so that her husband could live, the grieving widower consoles himself for his loss by going to bed with a statue of his late wife. In a poem by Ovid, the widow of the fallen hero Protesilaus keeps a portrait of her husband that she holds in her embrace as if he were still in her arms. At the city of Cnidos in western Asia Minor, a statue of Aphrodite by Praxiteles proves so exciting to an admirer that he spends the night with it and leaves the traces of his excitement on the marble surface. In Ethiopia, a black royal couple recognizes a white woman as their long-lost daughter only when the mother recalls that she had been looking up at a painting of the beautiful Andromeda precisely at the moment of conception.

The world of Greek and Roman antiquity provides innumerable examples of images that seem almost alive and exert a kind of supernatural power upon those who see them or touch them. Maurizio Bettini's book encompasses far more than the portrait of the lover in his title. The foregoing examples illustrate the range of his exploration of lifelike images. Although he begins with portraits of lost beloveds, by the time he is done Bettini has worked through a varied repertoire of affectionate embraces and sexual unions with apparently inanimate objects. He ends with a vivid account of Hostius Quadra, the decadent Roman, who enhanced the joys of copulation by watching the reflections in distorting mirrors.

Bettini has scoured the Greek and Latin sources, familiar and unfamiliar, for stories to tell. He casts his net wide. He even brings in shadows as vehicles of bodiless contact and touches on a quite different tradition of psychic power. In Athens, the sick were laid out in the streets so that they would lie under the shadow of Paul as he passed by, and of course the shadow or shade often served as the ghost of the departed. With the Epicurean poet Lucretius, Bettini sets up an inversion of his theme of the beloved's portrait. Lucretius condemns the love of living persons as itself a mere attachment to a simulacrum or an image. Arguing that humans are not what they seem to be, the poet advises that all sexual energy be spent as quickly and indiscriminately as possible.

Readers who know Lucretius's extraordinary poem *De Rerum Natura*, or *On the Nature of Things*, will immediately suspect that Bettini's interpretation of the poet-philosopher's views on sex has been influenced by a later (and pretty certainly apocryphal) tradition that he took a love potion, became deranged, and wrote his masterpiece in the occasional intervals of sanity. At the end of a beguiling chapter, the famous legend is duly trotted out. While professing caution, Bettini is nevertheless so entranced by the biographical explanation of Lucretius's doctrine that he rapturously adds to the legend himself: "We could perhaps imagine him obsessed by images of a woman, her features, her body, her complexion—an endless gallery of simulacra filled with a thousand poses, scenes from inconsequential or unforgettable adventure, a long hallway through which the crazed poet drags himself, as he grasps at fleeting appearances, desperately seeking to satisfy his insatiable desire."

All this makes for memorable reading, and as Laura Gibbs says in the preface to her translation of Bettini's book, he is a good storyteller. The problem is that he is too good. To supplement an already dubious tradition about Lucretius in this dithyrambic way is to deliver us straight into fiction. Similarly, since Bettini knows perfectly well that the mysterious relation between image and person is hardly peculiar to classical antiquity, he introduces Edgar Allan Poe's "The Oval Portrait" as a parallel, in order to allow himself a lengthy sequel to what Poe has himself given us. Poe's tale is admirably economical in its account of the slow death of a beautiful woman while she is having her picture painted. All her features are transferred to the canvas, and when the work is finished she is found to be dead. Poe's second version of this chilling episode is even shorter than his first. By composing an inappropriate sequel, without even warning the reader what he is doing until the end, Bettini the storyteller gets the better of him and calls into question his purpose and his taste.

Readers will summon up their own favorite stories from literature, perhaps the mechanical doll or the speaking portrait from E.T.A. Hoffmann by way of Offenbach's opera, or Oscar Wilde's portrait of Dorian Gray. Bettini is obviously drawn to the Don Juan story, which is only

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The Golan Heights

To Whom Do They Belong? Can Israel Survive Without Them?

Syria's president, Hafez Assad, has apparently "consented to discuss peace" with Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Barak, provided that Mr. Barak agrees to start negotiations where (allegedly) the late Prime Minister Rabin left off four years ago. Astonishingly and regrettably, Mr Barak seems to have agreed to this presumptuous imposition.

What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War. Until then it was just another province in the Ottoman empire, with ill-defined borders. In 1923, in an Anglo/French great-power play, the border between Syria and what was then called Palestine was established. The Golan Heights were ceded to Syria.

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians, having heavily fortified the area, subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shellings, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed them.

Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotics-dealing and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed against Israel, which is perceived as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both of which Syria totally rejects.

Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as ruthless and cunning as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Under Assad, Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs, who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that he was the mastermind and final authority in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of Pan Am flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is the size of the New York borough of Queens, about 10 miles wide, with a plateau on either side of a ridge. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel–just as in 1948, in 1967, and in 1973–would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to stay on constant alert and to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. The Golan, which ranges up to a height of 2300 ft., dominates the Jordan Valley, the lowest point on earth about 700 ft. below sea level. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks–backed up by missiles and airplanes–could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. It would be a strategically impossible situation, especially for a country as small as Israel–smaller than Lake Michigan, smaller by half than San Bernardino County in California. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

> "With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

In its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after more than fifty years of war and bloodshed, Israel has been prepared to make far-reaching concessions to Syria on the Golan, in exchange for real peace. But it is hoped that even Ehud Barak, Israel's recently-elected prime minister, will not be prepared to give up all of the Golan high ground and to return to the "death trap" borders of 1967, or anything close to them. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, most of which—with the recent exception of Jordan and of the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared or undeclared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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marginally relevant (it features an animate statue, but not a lover), and he cites with relish Pushkin's deliciously aberrant *The Stone Guest*, which turns Donna Anna into the Commendatore's wife instead of his daughter. In contemplating the classical material that Bettini abundantly provides, however, the reader is bound to wonder exactly what he is trying to prove about the ancient world. It is not news that portraits and statues were thought to have a kind of life force and could function, as at Roman funerals, as surrogates for the dead. We know that the greatest triumph for an artist was to fool the viewer, in the manner of Praxiteles, into treating a work of art as a living being.

It needs to be said that drawing power from an image, as the Ethiopian queen did, was an essential part of the respect accorded to representations of gods and goddesses, whose numinousness flowed through their images. Bettini is not really concerned with cult statues or painted icons. This is a pity, because his subject leads directly into problems of popular religion and the darker realm of magic. The link between the portrait of the lover and the image of a divinity is inescapable. Behind the episodes of lovers' portraits and lifelike statues is a complicated subject that is scarcely addressed. That subject is "the power of images," a phrase that has formed the title of significant books by David Freedberg and Paul Zanker. The writers of those books are art historians, and it is a perspective such as theirs that we badly need to make sense of stories about images. Rummaging in classical literature for references to images might be an exercise in old-fashioned literary criticism, but it is hard to see what Bettini wants to achieve by the headlong narration of all the tales that he tells.

To judge from the preface by Laura Gibbs, who is both his pupil and his translator, Bettini is trying to put into practice the lessons that he learned from the French school of social science, as exemplified in classical studies by Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne. These scholars tried to understand Greek mythology and religion by means of an imaginative reconstruction of ancient culture as it was actually lived. They teased out hidden patterns of thought and belief from carved and painted images, which could be illuminated through divine epithets, liturgical language, and cult practices. At the University of Siena, Bettini has founded a center for the anthropology of the ancient world, although it would seem that his impact has been greater in the United States than in his native Italy. An article about him last October in *La Stampa* characterized him as better known on this side of the Atlantic.

Gibbs also suggests that Bettini's anthropological approach to ancient culture is something altogether new. Yet anthropology and the classics have been mutually supportive for a long time, as any reader of Louis Gernet or Bettini's own French teachers could readily observe. And the relationship between the two disciplines has not always been an easy one. In her book *Anthropology and the Greeks*, which appeared in 1978, Sally Humphreys observed that "there is an idea that the classicist calls in the anthropologist—like an Anglo-Indian memsahib calling in the native servant—to deal with what [E. R.] Dodds called the 'disagreeably primitive things poking up their heads through the cracks in the fabric of Periclean rationalism.'" The École Pratique des Hautes Études en Sciènces Sociales pioneered the serious application of anthropology to classical studies, particularly through the influence of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Vernant, and Detienne.

Although classicists are obviously excluded from field work with native informants, they have made extensive use of visual material from the ancient world and applied models from other cultures to their interpretation of the classical myths. In a new book called *A World Full of Gods*, Keith Hopkins, the professor of ancient history at the University of Cambridge, has made an astonishing attempt to overcome the inaccessibility of ancient cultures by means of imagined time-travel into the past. Bulgakov had already tried something of this kind in *The Master and Margarita*, and Michael Crichton has just tried it in *Timeline*. Hopkins is no Crichton and certainly no Bulgakov, but his book honestly confronts the biggest problem of anthropological investigation of the ancient world.

BETTINI MAY HAVE been inspired by the Paris school, but he cannot work at their level. His book is irredeemably text-dependent. His exploitation of a sarcophagus depiction of Protesilaus and Laodamia near the beginning of his work, and of a buried doll near the end, are virtually all we hear of real surviving images. A partial reproduction of Gérôme's great painting of Pygmalion's embrace of Galatea, as she is transformed from stone into flesh and blood, makes a stunning dust-jacket for Bettini's book; but his anthology never achieves the visceral impact of such a moment. Similarly, the final scene of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* uncovers more of the primal power in the image of a lost beloved than any page in *The Portrait of the Lover*. As Hermione comes down from her pedestal and Leontes stands in rapt and loving amazement, he goes straight to the heart of the matter: "O, she's warm! / If this be magic, let it be an art / Lawful as eating."

In her preface, the translator tries to alert Bettini's readers to what she considers the unfamiliar ground that he will traverse in his work. She tells us that he is "deeply influenced by structuralism and semiotics," and this means, according to her, that his work "is based on a fundamental belief in the meaningfulness of human culture." It is hard to make out how this would distinguish Bettini from almost any other writer on the culture of antiquity. Gibbs clearly has great faith in her teacher, and it is ironic that Bettini owes to her his recent prominence in the Italian press. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* had singled her out this past autumn as one of five highly promising younger scholars in North America who are expected to make a mark in the new century. In *La Stampa* the photographs of Gibbs and Bettini appear side by side, and the headline ascribes to Bettini the words, "*ho costruito un genio*," or "I have constructed a genius."

THIS IS ALL rather odd for an otherwise obscure classical scholar in Siena. Bettini leads off his book with a quotation of Petrarch's marvelous poem on Simone Martini's portrait of his beloved Laura: "When I come to speak with her, she seems to listen to me, and to be favorably inclined: if only she were able to respond to my words." So it is appropriate that another Laura has played a role in building his own reputation. In fact, the eerie conjunction of Lauras calls to mind another portrait that worked its power as if it were a living person, the one of Laura in Otto Preminger's *film noir* of that name. The Laura whose portrait beguiled Dana Andrews ultimately does turn out to be alive, just like Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*.

The force of magic is clearly at work in the phenomena that Bettini has culled from the literary texts of ancient Greece and Rome, and an anthropologist might have helped us to understand what is going on. The return to life of Hermione or Laura had a real-world explanation, just as we know that the conduct of some ancient statues of divinities—spitting blood, or turning around—was stage-managed by priests. Yet it is the willingness to believe the incredible that Bettini's stories so amply document, and that needs to be explained.

This obsession with images even dominated the rhetoric of later Greek culture. The *logos* came to be employed by professional speakers and writers in the service of the creation of word-pictures, which was known as *ekphrasis*. Bettini touches on this development, but again he neg-

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lects to discuss it within the culture of its time. The *ekphrasis* becomes particularly important, as he notes, in the novels that emerge in Greek literature of the Roman period. Those are works that often build their effect on supposed deaths and lost lovers.

But those who are absent or deceased can be held in images that communicate their living presence. There is clearly a connection between word-painting and holding on to someone who has gone away. The hagiographers of early Christianity understood this connection. They explicitly compared the life of a saint with his painted icon. The verbal picture must explain, at least in part, the extraordinary popularity of those performing rhetoricians known as sophists in the Roman Empire. Philostratus, the writer who chronicled their exploits, has left behind a whole dossier of pictures in words under the simple title of *Images*.

One notable word picture from antiquity was translated into a famous Renaissance painting. The Greek novelist Achilles Tatius describes at the beginning of his work *Leucippe and Cleitophon*, which was written in the second century A.D., an imaginary picture that is programmatic for setting the motifs of the story to follow. He evokes Europa astride the bull whose form Zeus had assumed to carry her into the sea, as her friends stood in consternation on the shore. Bettini cites this image, but evidently he is unaware of its impact in a later age. The complete novel was published at Venice for the first time in an Italian translation in 1551. That was in good time for Titian to have read it there before painting his celebrated *The Rape of Europa* which now hangs in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Musuem in Boston. The painting is a scrupulous realization of the picture that Achilles Tatius had described over a thousand years before.

One puts down Bettini's work with gratitude for the wonderful stories that he tells. But they seem to float in a void. We are left semantically adrift, with no guidance as to why these stories were told or appreciated. They appear to have little resonance in the culture of antiquity or of later ages. Surely we ought to engage directly with surviving works of art, and to see the power of images in the context of religion and magic, to say nothing of their calculated exploitation by priests and politicians. The reader is left with a craving for a genuinely anthropological study of this material that would be reinforced by extensive reference to real images and by pertinent models in other cultural spheres. If Keith Hopkins' time-travel narrative is not satisfying, at least it recognizes the reader's appetite for more than we have here. ■

The Twentieth Century's Last Surprise

By JEFFREY HERF

Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, The Soviet Collapse and the New Europe by Angela Stent

(Princeton University Press, 300 pp., $29.95)

AT THE TIME and since, observers of the events of 1989-1990 in Europe have been properly amazed at what happened and at what did not happen. The Soviet empire collapsed in Eastern Europe. Divided Germany was unified. Democratic governments replaced communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union itself imploded and was reincarnated as quasi-democratic, quasi-authoritarian Russia. Yet a unified Germany has not become a menacing Fourth Reich, and Russia, despite a collapse of its economy and the spectacular loss of the Cold War, did not turn in bitterness and frustration to the alliance of nationalists and communists who were seeking to reverse the humiliations of a decade ago.

At the core of this epochal turn of events was a popular revolt from below against communist dictatorship, along with a complete transformation in Soviet policy at the top towards the American presence in Western Europe and the idea of a unified Germany within the NATO alliance. After a half a century of Cold War with NATO and the United States in Western Europe, and of propaganda directed at "revanchism" and reaction in West Germany, the leaders of the Soviet Union did a remarkable about-face in 1990: they grudgingly accepted the idea of a unified Germany within the NATO alliance.

And the scholars have followed close behind. In *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed*, Phillip Zelikow and Condoleeza Rice, former members of the Bush administration's National Security Council, offered a detailed account of the discussions between American and Soviet officials in which this remarkable transformation took place, a history of the American policymakers whose task was to end the division of Germany and Europe without humiliating the Soviet leadership. In *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany*, his study of the intersection of history made in the streets of Leipzig and in government offices in Germany and other major capitals, Charles Maier made an important contribution to the understanding of how and why all this happened. He focussed on the conjuncture of 1989, when long term processes of economic failure and eroding political legitimacy in East Germany coincided with an unexpected burst of peaceful revolutionary protest from below.

A small library of work on détente and the "second Cold War" of the 1980s and on the events of 1989-1990 examines, in English and in German, how the combination of the Western hard line combined with détente and *Ostpolitik* towards the East set the stage for the great transformation. To this library Angela Stent's fine book may now be added. It focuses on an insufficiently examined aspect of these events, namely, relations between the Soviet Union and West and East Germany, and then on German-Russian relations since 1990. Stent wants to explore what she calls "the great puzzle: why and how Moscow assented to what had always been depicted as its worst postwar political nightmare—a united Germany in NATO."

Stent has drawn selectively on archives, read memoirs of the major players, surveyed the relevant press accounts, drawn on expert commentary, and conducted interviews with many principals. She offers a great deal of material regarding the interaction of West German economic concessions in exchange for Soviet political concessions regarding unification. The

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result is a useful narrative that draws attention to German-Soviet and German-Russian relations and may serve as a guide for more deeply researched works still to come.

STENT DRAWS OUR attention to the corrosive impact of Western détente politics on the legitimacy and the stability of the East German government. Americans will recall that Willy Brandt's policies of détente aroused concerns in Washington—and in Bonn, too—that rhetoric about "security partnership" with the Soviet Union could erode the ideological foundations of West Germany's commitment to the Atlantic Alliance by unintentionally contributing to a language of "moral equivalence" between the Soviet Union and the West. In fact, on the West German left, détente did have the unintended effect of disparaging concern for the military balance of power and discouraging criticism of violations of human rights in the Soviet bloc, in the interest of preserving good relations with the Soviet Union.

Stent usefully reminds us that these processes of ideological blurring—even these legitimation crises—also existed for the Communist states. For East Germany in particular, despite vigorous government efforts to insulate domestic affairs from foreign policy normalization with West Germany, German-German détente, as Stent puts it, "created instability in the G.D.R." (German Democratic Republic, or East Germany), and it had the same effect in Eastern Europe, too. It did so by increasing contact with West German society and culture, and by depriving the East Germans and the Soviets of the old, familiar images of "Nazis in Bonn" with their "revanchist" plans in the East—ideas which, when linked to horrible memories of Nazi aggression and war crimes in World War II, bonded Warsaw Pact states together with the slogans of antifascism aimed at the specter of a renewed threat from Germany.

Stent points out that Walter Ulbricht and then Erich Honecker were repeatedly at odds with Soviet policy, for they feared that détente's normalization of relations with West Germany might eventually lead to the erosion of East German legitimacy. She is particularly effective in describing the Soviet balancing act involved in seeking better relations and economic benefits from the West Germans while trying to preserve the East German state.

Some of Stent's most interesting material concerns the Soviet *Germanisty*, or German specialists of the old school, especially Valentin Falin, the former Soviet Ambassador to West Germany, Yuli Kvitsinsky, best known in the West as the chief Soviet negotiator in the INF arms control talks in Geneva. (It was Kvitsinsky who took the "walk in the woods" with Paul Nitze, as the Soviet Union deployed SS-20s and sought to "freeze" Western counter-deployments.) During the crucial period of 1989-1990, when German unification hung in the balance, Falin, Kvitsinsky, and others in the Foreign Ministry opposed the path being taken by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze. They were deeply opposed to the emergence of a unified Germany in NATO, an outcome that they correctly viewed as the complete reversal of Soviet policy in the entire Cold War in Europe. As Falin put it in an interview with David Pryce-Jones, on the side of the Soviet Union in 1989-1990 "there were no statesmen, but only petit bourgeois in the highest positions who forgot everything that had existed in the past." "The past," of course, was Nazi Germany and its invasion of the Soviet Union. In contrast to the advocates of glasnost and perestroika, then, the *Germanisty* did not believe that Germany had overcome this past.

Given the cast of characters and the policy orientations that she examines, I would have liked Stent to have probed more deeply into how the Soviet defeat of 1983 was connected to the events of 1989-1990. Especially in light of the emphasis that she places on the corrosive impact of Western and West German détente policy on the legitimacy and stability of the East German government, she would have strengthened her argument by examining how the Western hard line shared by all of the leading NATO states in the 1980s led to the INF agreement in 1987 and thereby contributed to the dénouement two years later.

STENT IS VERY interested in how the decision-making process operated in the Kremlin in the period of unification. "In retrospect," she observes, "what is remarkable is the ineptness of the negotiating strategy, and the lack of forethought or clear definitions of interest or goals on the Soviet side, given how central the G.D.R. was to its postwar foreign policy." In the absence of an effective strategy, the Soviet Union under Gorbachev and Shevardnadze "pursued an almost entirely reactive policy" and bargained for substantial German economy concessions in return for accepting German political conditions. As they presided over the collapse of the Soviet Union, they also "brought about the rebirth of Germany as a major power."

Clearly it was not Gorbachev's intention to bring about the collapse of the entire Soviet empire and then the Soviet Union itself. Still, as Stent makes clear in a brief comparison of Gorbachev with Khrushchev, in the whirl of events everything came down to a simple and stark alternative: use armed force again in the Soviet bloc to crush efforts at reform, and thus bring the era of domestic reform, arms reduction, and good relations with the West to an end, or refuse to do so and allow the Central and East Europeans to go their own way, even if it meant an exit from the Soviet bloc and communism. Yet surely Gorbachev's decision to forego the use of force against popular protest in the streets was due less to the lack of strategy, or to uncoordinated decision-making processes which Stent emphasizes, than to a loss of faith in the status quo, and to a conviction that new policies were essential. Communism was no longer something for which these Soviet leaders were willing to kill.

Erich Honecker, the head of the East German government, remained a man of the old school; and had the likes of Brezhnev and Gromyko still been in power in the Kremlin, a great deal of blood might have flowed in the streets of East Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden in the fall of 1989. Stent reminds us that the East German leadership under Honecker remained among the most repressive in the bloc. It was so unhappy with some of Gorbachev's speeches that it censored them in East German publications in the late 1980s. Stent's analysis of the communications between Moscow and East Berlin confirms what press accounts of the time and since have noted: that Gorbachev refused to allow the use of Soviet troops to repress demonstrators, and that he also did not want the East German army to use force.

SEEN FROM THE perspective of 1987 or 1988, Gorbachev does not look like such a ham-fisted tactician at all. The military build-up of his predecessors had helped to elect right-of-center governments in Western Europe (and also the Socialist government of François Mitterrand, which supported the Western hard line), the United States and Japan, and it had made the Soviet Union a source of fear and foreboding in China and the Islamic world as well. With the articulation of perestroika and glasnost (there was more glasnost than perestroika), and with the signing of the INF agreement in 1987, Gorbachev undid the damage done by the Brezhnev era—and by the *Germanisty* in the Foreign Ministry in Moscow. He became, indeed, the most popular Soviet leader in Western Europe, the only Soviet leader to become popular in Western Europe in the history of the Cold War.

West German Social Democrats were

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meeting with members of the ruling Socialist Unity Party (the SED) in East Germany. The continued existence of two Germanys seemed more assured than ever. Gorbachev's problem was not a tactical one, for in important ways he was a brilliant tactician; it was instead that, like the *Neues Forum* intellectuals in East Berlin and Leipzig, he raised hopes for the "socialism with a human face" that had been crushed in 1968. This was the only effective card left for a Soviet leader to play in Europe; but by 1989 it came too late. The peoples and (outside East Germany) most of the dissidents of Eastern Europe and Central Europe had long ago turned from visions of a different and better socialism to varieties of market economics, political liberalism, and social democracy.

So when history went into overdrive in 1989, and events spun rapidly out of and beyond the control of political leaders, perestroika and glasnost no longer seemed at all radical enough to meet the demand for change. Moreover, the Soviets had a very weak hand to play in Europe. The military card had been tried, and failed in 1983. The Soviet economy was an embarrassment, and its dictatorial polity no longer inspired any significant groups in Western Europe. The old guard denounced Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, but the only serious alternative to the collapse of communism and the end of East Germany was a massive use of force and a repetition of 1956 and 1968 on a potentially even larger scale. In contrast to the *Germanisty*, Gorbachev was cosmopolitan enough to understand that a unified Germany in 1990, if embedded in European and Atlanticist structures, was not the Germany depicted in communist propaganda, and would not pose a security threat to the Soviet Union.

Given her impressive knowledge of the Soviet Union, one wishes that Stent had devoted far more attention to the issue that Zelikow and Rice treated in such detail in their work, namely why the Soviets accepted a unified Germany in NATO. Zelikow and Rice argue convincingly that there was no "great puzzle." They describe intense discussions between George Bush and James Baker and Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, in which the Americans convinced their Soviet counterparts that it would be in the interest of the Soviet Union to keep a unified Germany within NATO.

With the United States still engaged in Europe and extending nuclear deterrence over a unified Germany, the new Germany would not be tempted to develop its own nuclear arsenal. A neutral Germany outside NATO, on the other hand, might succumb to such a temptation. The great transformation in Soviet thinking of 1989-1990 entailed coming to the apparently counter-intuitive conclusion that the presence of the United States in Europe, rather than its absence, would serve to enhance Soviet security. I wish that Stent had inquired more deeply into this enormous shift.

Stent concludes her work with a discussion of the debates about NATO enlargement and the opposition to it across the Russian political spectrum, and with reflections on the current and future prospects for German-Russian relations. Here she offers evidence of how deeply the Soviet leadership and then the Russian leadership believed that the expansion of NATO did indeed constitute a breaking of promises made in 1989-1990 that German unification would not be followed by NATO's eastward expansion. This is a book that helps to unravel the puzzle of how the Cold War's unlikely end came about, and suggests directions for future archival research directed at deepening our understand of how a unified Germany and a post-communist Russia emerged, without anybody paying for these astounding transformations with their lives. ■

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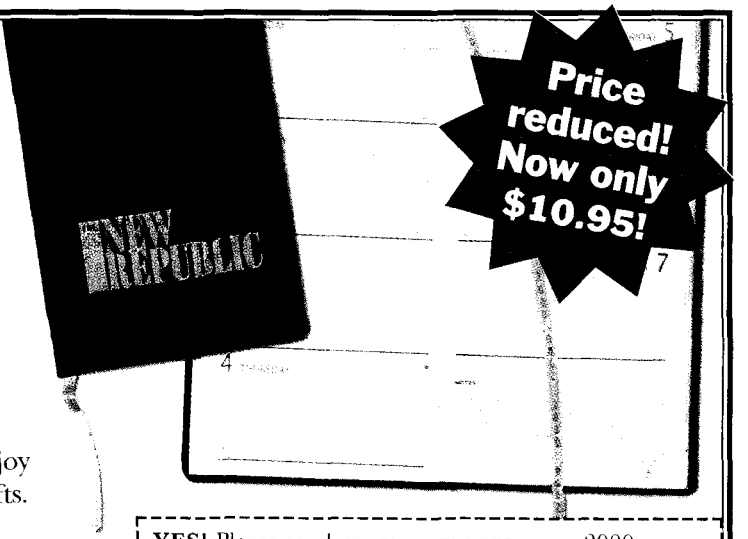

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Rebound

LET ME RAISE A FIST FOR old time's sake: I was a teenage black nationalist. Of course, this was not uncommon among Jewish males in the upper-middle-class confines of upper Northwest Washington, D.C. My closest buddies and I dutifully read our fathers' underlined copies of Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice* and blared Public Enemy from our Volvo station wagons. Some of us even strutted around our private school in T-shirts echoing then-Mayor Marion Barry's famous words of protest: "Goddamn Bitch Set Me Up." Our parents approved of, and actively indulged, our radical chic. Sure, this was the 1980s, when the rest of the country was embracing Reaganomics and flashy materialism. Or so we heard. Washington's liberal elite were happily paying high taxes, fantasizing about a Tom Harkin presidency, and getting excited about Ethiopian food.

THEN CAME BILL CLINTON'S THIRD Way and a booming new economy, consigning the city's wildly ineffective liberalism to the dustbin of history. Just like the bourgeoisie of Kansas City or New Jersey, Washington's public-interest yuppies have acquired bull-market tastes. Back in the old neighborhood, they've traded the romaine lettuce of Safeway for mesclun greens from Fresh Fields. There are finally restaurants where you can satisfy your craving for seared foie gras. And, most importantly, upper Northwest lost patience with Barry's race-baiting and embraced Mayor Anthony Williams's bureaucracy-busting centrism.

THIS MONTH, ONE OF THE LAST holdouts of old Washington underwent a bull-market makeover, or, to be more precise, a Chicago Bull makeover. Abe Pollin, the liberal owner of the Washington Wizards (née Washington Bullets), essentially handed over control of his basketball team to Michael Jordan. (A year earlier, Pollin sold a minority stake in the team to a group of investors led by an America Online exec.) The theory behind the deal is flawless: Jordan brings celebrity and intensity to a hapless team that lacks any semblance of promise. As a fan, I am ecstatic. During my lifetime, the team has been nothing short of pathetic—it last won a play-off series during Ronald Reagan's first term.

AS A THIRD-GENERATION WASHINGtonian, though, I am ambivalent about Pollin's diminishing presence. Although Pollin lives in Bethesda, Maryland, he embodies the values of the upper Northwest of my youth. He made a fortune as a shrewd real estate magnate, but he ran his basketball team as if he were Paul Wellstone. During the mid-'90s, as the city's homicide rate ascended to alarming heights, Pollin tossed aside the team's old name: "The name Bullets for a sports team is no longer appropriate.... If I save one life, make a change in one life, it'll be worth it." Unlike most of the NBA's unctuous owners, he personally financed the club's new downtown arena without bilking Washington taxpayers. And he donated millions to inner-city charities. A less earnest patron would have lost patience with the District's nutty political economy long ago and moved the Wizards to some undeserving blotch of Sun Belt sprawl.

WHAT'S THE CONNECTION BETWEEN Pollin's liberal style and the team's abysmal record? It pains me even to pose such a neoconservative question, but the answer is clear: Pollin consistently allowed his conscience to interfere with the basketball business. Before he sold it last year, Pollin's hockey team, the Capitals, fared far better, because he spent less time micromanaging its operation. He remained stubbornly loyal to the nice guys who ran the organization, especially General Manager Wes Unseld—the star of the club's 1978 championship team—though Unseld has produced horrendous results. And he has insisted that his team recruit more "rock-solid human being[s]" (his words). Unfortunately, there aren't too many in the NBA, and you have to make tremendous sacrifices to obtain them. For instance, two years ago, in a fit of disappointment, Pollin traded to Sacramento one of the most inspiring young players in the league, Chris Webber, after he tussled with a highway patrolman. In return for Webber, who has gone on to turn Sacramento into one of the best teams in the league, Pollin acquired the aging guard Mitch Richmond, a very rock-solid person, who has quietly led the Wizards to a 13-29 record this season.

LIKE THE OLD DISTRICT GOVERNment, Pollin mismanaged badly. In his quest to turn his team around, he's created new layers of worthless bureaucracy filled with middle managers and inflated titles. The Wizards' organizational flowchart must resemble a Jackson Pollock canvas: the team now has an owner, a part-owner, a president of basketball operations, a president, and a general manager. Perhaps this helps explain why it has shelled out millions on ridiculous expenditures. Currently, the Wizards have both the league's sixth-highest payroll and its fifth-worst record. Pollin has had a knack for drafting the absolute worst players available: the sickly seven-foot-seven Romanian Gheorghe Muresan, the knobby seven-foot-six Manute Bol, the ineffectual five-foot-three point guard Muggsy Bogues. The rest of the league routinely embarrassed these horribly awkward players. They made Washington a laughingstock, just as Barry's drug arrest at the Vista Hotel did.

ENTER MICHAEL JORDAN. LIKE THE congressionally mandated control board that has managed Washington's finances for the past five years (and served as Williams's entrée into D.C. politics), Jordan is the apolitical outsider who has arrived to solve the problems that the city can't solve for itself. Jordan has promised he will bring a new efficiency to the Wizards' operation, ending the team's tolerance of mediocrity. If he runs the Wizards as soundly as he's managed his contracts with Nike and Gatorade, the team is likely to substantially improve. Jordan, of course, will not move to the city or become part of the community's fabric. And perhaps this is just part of Washington's transition into the new economy: the triumph of national brands over local loyalty, of business acumen over upper Northwest idealism. But, if the Wizards win a championship, who cares?

ONLY MY MORE CURMUDGEONLY HIGH school friends would complain about Washington's bull-market bliss, its abundance of nice new restaurants, the Fresh Fields going up in previously non-yuppie Logan Circle, and all the Audis parked along Connecticut Avenue. The city is unquestionably a more pleasant place to live. However, I can't help but be a little sad about the demise of the old upper Northwest. It feels as if the Beltway-bashing populists and New York snobs were right all along when they condemned the old Washington as a bastion of gauche, out-of-touch bureaucrats. Maybe the values of upper Northwest were just an anachronistic leftover from the '60s. As every Wizards fan knows, it stinks to be on the losing team.

FRANKLIN FOER

FRANKLIN FOER is a staff writer at *U.S. News & World Report*.

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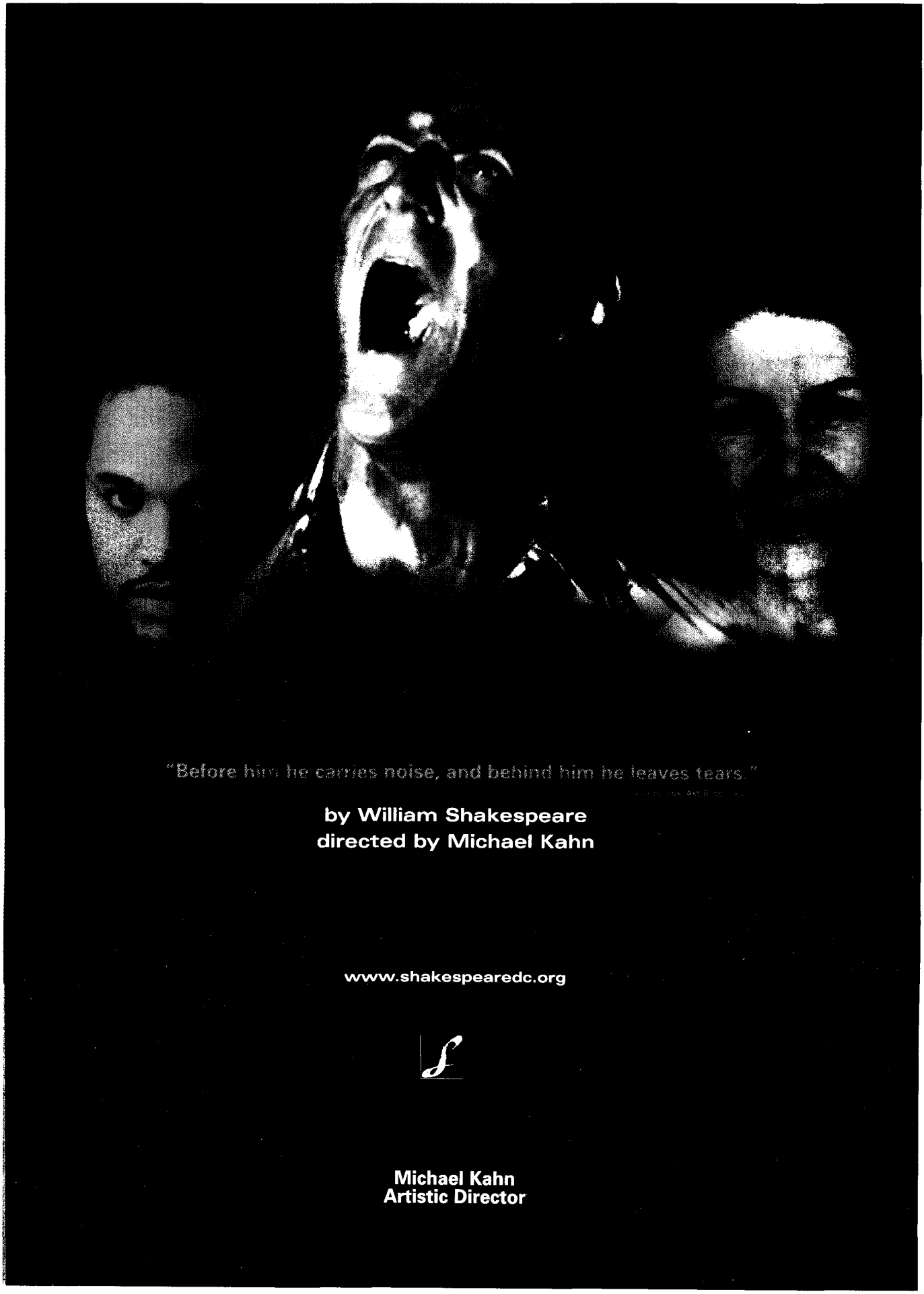

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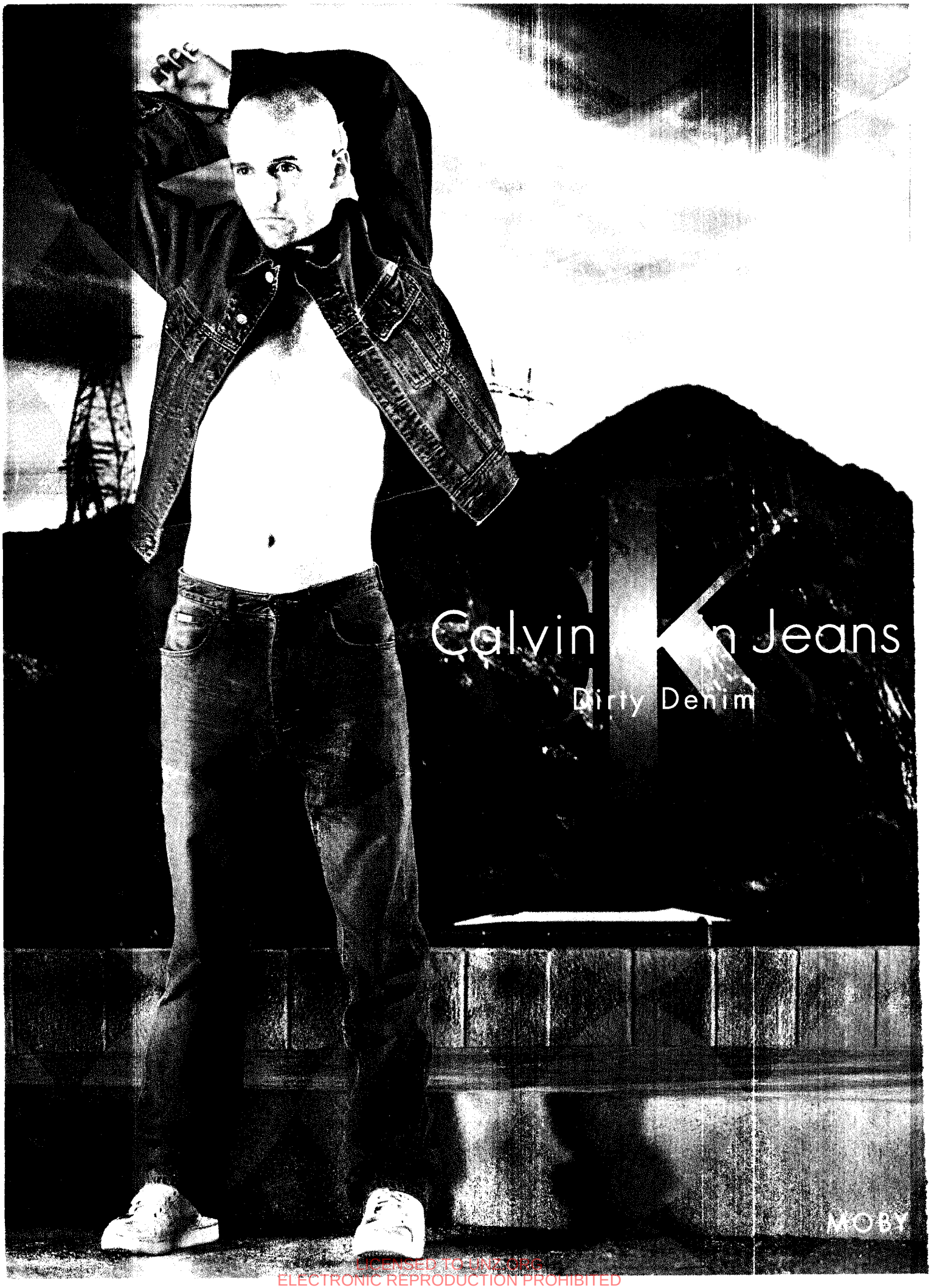

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